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Paul's understanding and use of the concept of election in Romans 9-11

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Abstract

This thesis contends that Paul is wholly consistent in his understanding and use of the concept of election in Romans 9-11. Drawing upon both Old Testament teaching and a double predestinarian tradition finding its most coherent and reasoned expression in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Paul employs the concept of election in Romans 9 to demonstrate how God may be considered faithful to His covenant with Israel. At present, the Creator honors His word by selecting out of ethnic Israel those whom He has predestined as children of promise. These comprise *true Israel*, and are recognized in Paul's day as Jews embracing Jesus as Messiah. Along with believing Gentiles, they constitute the "vessels of mercy predestined to eschatological glory." The remainder of Israel is hardened into unbelief, and viewed as "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction." Thus, in Romans 9 Paul dismisses a purely nationalistic concept of election in favor of an Israel formed by God's sovereign election of individuals to salvation. Romans 11, however, seems to overrule this individualized perspective of election. Paul declares that God has not completely or finally rejected unbelieving, ethnic Israel. As a corporate entity, through the existence of 'the remnant' she enjoys the continuity of both a theocratic and soteriological election. Although most of his contemporary, unbelieving kinsmen have not been chosen to salvation, Paul holds firmly to the mystery that at the close of the age God will bring future Israel into His mercy. Here, at the consummation of history, God's individualized, electing purpose (Rom 9) and His corporate election of all Israel (Rom 11) dovetail, and God is fully glorified as both Jew and Gentile are rescued from disobedience solely through the sovereign, elective mercy of God.

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None of the author's research contained in this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in this or any other university.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Perhaps no biblical passage has caused so much curiosity and controversy in the theological history of the Church as Romans 9-11. And within those three chapters, Romans 9 has generally been the center[1] of the storm. Here more than anywhere else in the Bible we find the linking of major themes such as salvation history, election, predestination, righteousness, mercy, wrath and glory.

It is no wonder that over the last 1900 years, theologians and lay persons alike have struggled to grasp Paul's intricate argumentation, and have come to such widely different conclusions. A brief survey of the history of its interpretation will suffice to show the extent of the controversy.[2] One of the earliest of the Church Fathers to deal with Romans 9-11 was Origen, who interpreted them unusually to defend a strong stand on free will (this apparently in opposition to gnostic groups which rallied around the theme of election to justify their claims to exclusiveness). His approach has been seminal (especially through the commentaries of Chrysostom) for most major theologians of the eastern Church even up to the present day, and also for western theologians predating Augustine. With the bishop of Hippo came an evolving interpretation which

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[1] Throughout this thesis, words will be spelled according to American English conventions.

[2] For a more detailed overview of the history of interpretation of Romans 9ff., cf. W. Beyschlag, *Die paulinische Theodicee, Römer IX-XI: ein Beitrag zur biblischen Theologie*, Halle 1868; W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, Edinburgh 1902, 269-75; and K. H. Schelkle, *Paulus, Lehrer der Väter. Die altkirchliche Auslegung von Römer 1-11*, Düsseldorf 1956; id., "Erwählung und Freiheit im Römerbrief nach der Auslegung der Väter," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 131 (1951) 17-31, 189-207.

increasingly emphasized predestination over free will and shifted the debate

toward the realm of philosophical discussion,[3] thereby eclipsing the original

issues which led the apostle Paul to question the election of Israel in the first

place. Augustine's orderly emphasis on the doctrine of particular election based

upon prevenient grace alone has been the determinative influence in western

exegesis of Romans 9-11 up until recent times.[4] Aquinas, in his *Summa*

Theologiae, provides perhaps the most exhaustive philosophical outworking of

Augustine's thoughts on election and predestination.[5]

In the period of the Reformation, Romans 9-11 led John Calvin to

develop a systematic understanding of election,[6] predestination and grace which

subordinated human free will to the sovereign decree of God. In reaction to

this, Jacobus Arminius sought to find in Romans 9 a way to maintain the free-

dom of the human will with regard to individual salvation. This clash escalated

into a doctrinal debate which all but overpowered dispassionate historical-

grammatical approaches to an understanding of this explosive passage until rela-

tively recent times.

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[3] Cf. *Ad Simplicianum*, 1, q. 2,3,7,10,16; *Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum*, 1.141.

[4] Timothy George (*Theology of the Reformers*, Nashville: Broadman, 1988) notes that Augustine found the basis for his 'harsh' understanding of election and predestination in Romans 9-11 ("Out of the mass of fallen humanity God chooses some for eternal life and passes over others who are thus doomed for destruction, and this decision is made irrespective of human works or merits"), and that "In the thousand years between Augustine and Luther, the main drift of medieval theology was devoted to watering down Augustine's stringent predestinarianism" (74).

[5] Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, Pars Prima, cv. art. 5; Prima Secundae, cxiii.

[6] Calvin, *Predestination*, 68: "...the salvation of the faithful depends upon the eternal election of God, and...for this no cause can be given except His gratuitous good pleasure....There is certainly a mutual relation between the elect and the reprobate, so that the election spoken of here cannot stand, unless we confess that God separated out from others certain men as seemed good to Him." (Cf. also *Institutes*, 3.23.31.) Calvin contends against those who seek to shake "...that eternal counsel of God by which some are elected to salvation and others destined for destruction" (147).

In the last two centuries, the emphasis has once again focused on the original, historical setting of Paul's thought, and his particular purpose in writing chapters 9-11 of Romans. Yet even still there is nothing near unanimity on how these chapters, and specifically chapter 9, should be interpreted. Though it is fairly clear that in 9-11 Paul seeks to answer the question of God's faithfulness to Israel in terms of whether the divine word of promise has failed (9.6a), yet it is not at all clear exactly how he argues to this end in Rom 9: to what does he appeal in his opening justification (9.6b-13) -- the predestination and election of individuals or of people groups; is he dealing primarily with historical destinies or with the questions of eternal salvation and damnation (9.14-18); does he raise and/or settle the issue of free will and determinism through his argument for the sovereignty of God (9.15-23)?

Perhaps the most difficult and dangerous hurdle in the interpretation of this passage is the passion of presuppositions concerning the above questions which exegetes bring to the text. The statement attributed to Hallam that "every one who had to defend a cause, found no course so ready as to explain the Scriptures consistently with his own tenets,"[7] could be said not only of most ancient exegetes but of many modern interpreters as well. Few studies consistently and objectively wrestle with the critical issues raised and dealt with by Paul.

To date, there are no serious treatises which have as their primary focus an investigation of Paul's understanding and use of the concept of election in Romans 9-11. Numerous works deal with closely related themes (e.g., Israel as the people of God; predestination in Paul's thought; Paul's understanding of salvation history), but the question of Paul's understanding of divine election in

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[7] Sanday and Headlam, civ.

these central chapters in light of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Judaism(s) of his day has not been adequately researched.

1.1. A Brief Review of Pertinent Literature

Two important studies of major themes in Romans 9-11 which bear on the concept of election are *Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Gottes Volk*, by Christian Müller, and *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus*, by Ulrich Luz. Though both were written in the 1960s (the former in 1964 and the latter in 1968) they have remained influential studies in the field, as is evidenced by the considerable comment they still evoke in recent commentaries.

1.1.1. C. Müller: Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Gottes Volk

Müller's main concern is the interrelationship between the righteousness of God and the nation of Israel as God's people. He presents a history of understandings of δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ in relation to Romans 9-11 beginning with F. C. Baur and concluding with Bultmann. Then, following the historical-traditional method, he proceeds to a rather short analysis of Romans 9-11 (pp. 27-48), highlighting the themes of creation and of Israel as the covenant people of God. This leads him to investigate Paul's understanding of "the problem of Israel" in Romans 1-8 and its relationship to the δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ. The immediate question in 9.6-23 of God's possible unrighteousness in casting off the majority of Jews in Paul's day (as evidenced by their rejection of Paul's gospel) leads Müller to a consideration of δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ and predestination in the light of God's unconditional sovereignty as Creator over his creation. Israel is seen as the illustration *par excellence* within history of God's freedom to elect or cast off as he chooses. But covenant faithfulness is not the heart of God's righteous dealings with Israel, according to Müller. Instead, Paul has replaced the concept of covenant with that of creation, so that God's righteousness may

now be more generally defined as the faithfulness of the Creator to the creation.

(Still, what ultimately transpires with Israel in her relationship with God is of

critical importance, because it will confirm or deny the faithfulness of God with

particular clarity. Hence Paul takes great pains to assure his readers that in the

end, God will save all Israel.[8]) God shows this faithfulness to all creation in the

Christ event, and bestows his grace universally (to both Jews and Gentiles)

through Christ. No longer can God's grace be interpreted as bound solely to

Israel; since Paul has redefined the covenant boundaries in terms of Adam, all

human beings are embraced in the covenant of grace, not just Jews. The con-

cept of predestination becomes the means by which Paul ties God's rights *over*

his creation together with his faithfulness *to* his creation. Since all human

beings are fallen in Adam and no one can make himself righteous before God,

God alone can and does bring this righteousness about, through Christ.

Predestination is not to be viewed as some independent or objective philosophi-

cal reality but as a truth understood only when one has been grasped by Christ,

when one has been caught by his transforming κλῆσις. As such, predestination

has in the end a purely positive function, designating the righteousness of God

in his faithfulness to all creation through the universal gift of justification in

Christ.

While Müller draws many valuable insights, his work is open to

criticism at three points. First, he fails to substantiate a number of his exegeti-

cal and theological assertions. This is a necessary outcome of his attempt to

analyze the whole of Romans 9-11 in only twenty pages.[9] Though evocative,

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[8] Müller, 113: "Die Bezogenheit der δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ auf Israel, also das Moment der ἀλήθεια, bindet den Begriff an die Geschichte: Der sein Recht beanspruchende Schöpfer ist der Herr des Geschichte, deren heimliches Zentrum Israel bleibt. Nur so ist gewährleistet, daß die δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ Gottes Recht an seiner Schöpfung ist, das sich in der neuen Menschheit verwirk-licht."

[9] Not only is Müller's analysis of Romans 9-11 abbreviated, his whole study consists of only 113 pages.

his thoughts are not always sufficiently supported. Second, despite all his considerations of the concept δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, Müller fails to recognize the possibility in Romans 3 and 9 of a further and more primary meaning than "faithfulness to his creation". Especially in light of 9.15 and 17 where in the context of justifying God's righteousness in election Paul chooses two Old Testament passages (Ex 33.19 and 9.16) which are linked by the word ὄνομα,[10] one could make a strong case for taking Paul to understand the righteousness of God there as God's faithfulness to the glory of his own name, his overriding concern to demonstrate the power of his splendor, particularly in this case through his absolute freedom to elect and to cast off. Müller's failure to reckon with this alternative understanding weakens an otherwise strong thesis. Lastly, and most importantly from the vantage point of this proposal, Müller does not deal comprehensively with the concept of divine election in Romans 9-11. His concern is primarily with the interaction of two major themes in the epistle as a whole, the righteousness of God and the people of God. While his investigations certainly entail a wrestling with the notion of God's election in connection with his major interests, a direct study of this theme is relegated to a two page subsection under the broader topic of predestination as the righteousness of God.

1.1.2. U. Luz: Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus

In this rather compendious work, Luz utilizes Romans 9-11 as a framework on which to reconstruct the apostle Paul's understanding of history. Employing a linear historical model, Luz divides his study into two main sec-

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[10] Müller himself recognizes this important point (31, n25): "Das Zitat Ex. 33,19 hat insofern Gewicht, als das Judentum hier den Namen Gottes umschreiben fand (Michel 208). Sicher nicht zufällig erscheint V.17 auch das Stichwort ὄνομα."

tions: *Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* and *Zukunft und Gegenwart.* The first section is further divided into three subsections: die gegenwärtige Vergangenheit -- das Gotteswort des Alten Testaments; die abgetane Vergangenheit -- Gesetz und Geschichte; and eine Gesamtschau der Geschichte? -- Gottes Plan und Prädestination. In these three chapters, Luz deals successively with the themes of Paul's use of the Old Testament (first in Romans 9-11 and then in his letters generally), Paul's understanding of the Law and its place within God's purposes, and an overview of history from the viewpoint of God's predestining plan.[11] Part two consists of 5 chapters investigating Paul's understanding of the future of Israel and the Church respectively, and of the relationship between the present and the future in terms of both the eschatological tension in the life of the believer and the mission of the Church during this "interim time" (die Zwischenzeit).

As its title indicates, this work seeks to flesh out Paul's understanding of history, using Romans 9-11 as a foundation for research but considering the apostle's views reflected in other letters as well. His basic conclusion is that Paul demonstrates no linear understanding of history as such but sees history only in terms of theological affirmation by which the past saving acts of God are intended to inform our lives in the present.[12] While an investigation of this subject necessarily includes references to divine election in the course of salvation history, Paul's concept of election as such is not Luz's main focus. As with C. Müller, Luz is interested in Paul's understanding of predestination, but not in relation to election.[13] Rather, he seeks through a study of Pauline

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[11] This section, which consists of 40 pages, has greatest relevance for our interests.

[12] Cf. the balanced critique of this conclusion by J. Cambier ("L'histoire et le salut dans Rm 9-11," *Biblica* 51 (1970), 241-52). Cambier acknowledges Paul's concern with the application of salvation history to the present life of the believer, but he points out that this does not in itself rule out the likelihood that Paul held a linear view of history.

[13] In Luz's opinion, Paul's predestinarian declarations serve to emphasize truths about

predestination passages for insights into the apostle's view of history. Thus, in his chapter on God's plan and predestination, after comparing the thought of predestination found in Qumran literature with that of Paul in Romans 9.14-24, and then briefly considering other predestination material in Paul (Rom 8.28-30; 1 Cor 1.18, 2.7; 2 Cor 2.15f.), Luz draws three principal conclusions: 1) *Although there is a strong degree of affinity between Paul and Qumran on predestination,*[14] *the apostle shows strong reservations in his use of this concept while Qumran writings on the other hand give evidence that the weaving of the notion of predestination into the fabric of a systematic cosmology has begun to take place.* Further, for Qumran predestination serves to affix and affirm the community's place in God's purposes, whereas for Paul only Christ (the Wisdom of God) is considered to be predestined in this manner. With reference to the Church he uses predestination on the one hand to destroy any false certainty about salvation or on the other to proclaim the certainty of salvation specifically in connection to Christ.[15] 2) *The motif of predestination in Paul is not uniform in its origins or usages.* Luz maintains that in passages such as Rom 8.28-30, 1 Cor 1.18, 2.7, and 2 Cor 4.3 we come across the thought of the pre-Pauline hellenistic Jewish-Christian community while in Romans 9.22f. Paul has formulated a new and independent position which he employs to a different end.

God, not to offer precise details about human destiny (cf. 249, 255, 262-64).

[14] According to Luz (262), common to Paul and Qumran are the concept of double predestination, the importance of the idea of creation as a background for a theocentrically viewed 'doctrine' of predestination, and the avoidance of a "deterministic objectivization" of the concept of predestination.

[15] Luz, 262-3: "Viellecht der bedeutsame Unterschied liegt dort, daß in der Sekte der Prädestinationsgedanke dazu dient, den Ort der Gemeinde -- nicht unbedingt auch des Einzelnen -- in der Gottesgeschichte zu fixieren, während bei Paulus in änlicher [sic] Weise höchstens der Ort der Weisheit, Christ, fixiert wird, während im übrigen der Prädestinationsgedanke entweder dazu dient, falsche Heilsgewißheit zu zerstören (R. 9,19ff.), oder dann, echte Heilsgewißheit gerade in Bindung an das Christusgeschehen zu verkünden."

3) *In Paul's understanding, the relationship between predestination and history cannot be expressed in a simple formula, in contrast to the thought of Qumran.* The concept of predestination does not constitute the secret framework behind his manifold references to past history. The most that can be said is that for Paul the concept of predestination is an absolutely theocentric idea which points out that God intends himself to be the focus of his acts in past and present.

With reference to an investigation of Paul's understanding of divine election in Romans 9-11, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus* has the following limitations: 1) it considers election strictly in relation to the overriding concern of the monograph, i.e., Paul's understanding and use of 'history' in his writings; in light of this, Luz treats Paul's understanding of election in Romans 9-11 only tangentially -- it surfaces in three pages on the patriarchal traditions in 9.6-13,[16] a sixteen page subsection on predestination in Romans 9.19-24,[17] and a subsection on the future of Israel according to Romans 11.25ff.;[18] 2) its conclusions regarding the limited relationship between Pauline and Qumran thought in the area of predestination (and by implication, election) are open to criticism, as has been demonstrated in particular by Gerhard Maier, whose work on Jewish views of divine predestination we will consider next.

1.1.3. Gerhard Maier: Mensch und freier Wille

In his detailed 1971 work, Mensch und freier Wille nach den jüdischen Religionsparteien zwischen Ben Sira und Paulus, Gerhard Maier considers the close affinities between the predestinarian statements of Paul in Romans 9-11

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[16] Cf. 64-66.

[17] Cf. 235-250.

[18] Cf. 286-300.

and those of Qumran. He does this, though, in the larger framework of Jewish thought on free will and predestination as understood by the Sadducees, Pharisees and Qumran from the time of Ben Sira to Paul. Beginning with an investigation of Josephus' reports concerning the theologies of these different Jewish groups, he then examines Sirach, the Dead Sea Scrolls (particularly 1QS 3.13-4.26) and the Psalms of Solomon to elucidate the positions of the particular groups behind these documents concerning human free will and divine predestination. With that background material, Maier then turns to the letters of Paul, and Romans 9-11 in particular, asking how the apostle's writings should be viewed in light of the various Jewish predestinarian/free will traditions extant in Paul's day. He ultimately concludes that Paul's thinking in general, and particularly in Romans 9, follows along the line of an Old Testament predestinarian tradition which developed through Sirach 33 into its most radical, individualistic form at Qumran.[19] According to Maier, in Romans 9 Paul constructed a double predestination argument in conscious opposition to the prevailing Pharisaic position of his day which, although it embraced divine predestination in the realm of providence, sought at the same time to protect the sphere of the human will from any divine, determinative influence.[20] Indeed all of Romans 9-11 is seen to be ruled by the central thought of predestination (as expressed in the πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ).[21] Disputing Schoeps' claim[22] that there are no specific Jewish parallels to Romans 9-11, Maier offers the fruit of his detailed

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[19] Cf. particularly pp. 356-66, 376-82.

[20] Maier argues that Pss Sol 9.4-5 reflects the popular Pharisaic view that for God to act justly, man must have freedom of will in order to be held accountable.

[21] Ibid., 399.

[22] H.-J. Schoeps, *Paulus*, 258: "Fragt man schließlich auch hier nach speziellen jüdischen Parallelen zu Röm. 9-11, so liegt es klar, daß es keine geben kann."

monograph as evidence that a high degree of affinity exists between Paul and Qumran regarding the concept of predestination. The so-called "modern problem" of determinism vs. indeterminism turns out to be not so modern after all.[23]

As with the previous books reviewed, Maier is concerned not with election *per se*, but with closely related concepts, in this case predestination and free will. But while the question of Paul's understanding and use of election in Romans 9-11 is not Maier's central focus, his work nevertheless offers a springboard from which such a study could be launched. Since in Jewish predestinarian thought the concept of divine election generally finds an important place, one should expect that, if Maier's conclusions are accurate concerning free will and predestination, Paul's concept of election might also show closer parallels to that of Qumran than to any other contemporary Jewish groups. An understanding of election in the Dead Sea Scrolls might help to clarify Paul's perspective in the often perplexing argument of Romans 9-11.

1.1.4. John Piper: The Justification of God

Written in 1983 by John Piper, *The Justification of God: an Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9.1-23* purports to be "an objective, historical-grammatical exegesis of Romans 9.1-23." To summarize briefly, Piper argues that Paul's central purpose in writing Romans 9 is to defend God's righteousness "in choosing unconditionally those on whom he will have mercy and those whom he will harden...for in this 'electing purpose' he is acting out of a full allegiance to his name and esteem for his glory."[24] Through this detailed and well-informed exegetical study, Piper concludes that Paul's view of

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[23] Maier, 352.

[24] Piper, 204.

God's unconditional election and predestination in Romans 9 refers specifically to individuals rather than simply to nations or people groups, and to eternal destinies rather than merely to appointments within history. As such, God's absolute freedom to elect or reject takes precedence over human freedom of will. While not theologically "in vogue" today, these conclusions find their precursors in the writings of many pre-1900's biblical scholars. In the rush to rightly avoid treating Romans 9-11 as a doctrinal compendium, the majority of scholars today concern themselves with questions regarding the form and structure of Paul's arguments, the occasion and purpose behind the epistle in general and 9-11 in particular, Jewish-Gentile relations at Rome, Paul's missionary strategy, issues of Jewish particularism vs. the universalism of the gospel, and so on. Investigations concerning the theology undergirding the apostle's "contingent" arguments have been largely ignored or abandoned. It is perhaps a good thing, then, that they should find a modern voice in this monograph by John Piper.

Piper's study of Romans 9.1-23 seems comprehensive enough for what it seeks to achieve, but it leaves one major question unanswered: given that Romans 9-11 form a theologically discrete unit, how well do his above-mentioned exegetical and theological conclusions cohere with Paul's thought in the remainder of this section? Assuming that Paul is consistent in his thought throughout the three chapters, any conclusions from chapter 9 must fit together with Paul's subsequent deliberations. As Ulrich Luz once remarked to me in a personal conversation,[25] "Anyone can find such conclusions from Romans 9, but the real test is whether they can be held in light of Romans 11."

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[25] Durham, 22 October 1991.

1.2. Thesis Overview

The purpose of this thesis is to take up that challenge. Our first section will consist of an overview of the development and meaning(s) of divine election in the Old Testament. Secondly, we will investigate Qumran's understanding and use of election in the Dead Sea Scrolls, working from the hypothesis that of all the intertestamental literature the Scrolls most closely resemble the underlying theology of Romans 9-11 in the areas of predestination, election, remnant ideology, and the sovereignty of God.[26] In section three we turn to the argument of Romans 9.1-29 with a view to uncovering Paul's understanding and use of the concept of election in that immediate context. Armed with the conclusions obtained from this study, we consider finally the apostle's thoughts on election in 11.1-32 and ask whether and how Paul may demonstrate himself consistent in his understanding and use of this central theological concept throughout the difficult, often convoluted treatise of Romans 9-11.

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[26] Due to space limitations we are not presently able to include research on the concept of election in the various other major Jewish intertestamental works, but throughout the chapters dealing with Qumran, Romans 9 and Romans 11, we refer to and compare other texts as appropriate.

Chapter 2: Election in the Old Testament

1. Introduction

For the people of Israel as depicted in the Hebrew scriptures, election comprises a central reality of their existence. Dunn[27] labels it one of the four pillars[28] of second Temple Judaism (along with monotheism, the Law and the Temple), though it may confidently be asserted that election stands as a pillar of Israelite religion from its earliest days -- one of the formative principles of Israel's self-understanding and of her *heilsgeschichtlich* approach to history.

1.1. A Working Definition of Election

With such a ubiquitous term as election, it is both easy and dangerous to assume from the outset that one knows its proper meaning.[29] Yet one must begin somewhere, and so we shall offer a basic, working definition of election in its theological sense which will be open to development and change as our study progresses. The concept of election is composed of five basic parts: the subject -- God -- who is the initiator of the ensuing relationship; the activity characterized by God's initiative -- the choosing and its relational corollaries; the object of God's choice -- the people of Israel; the purpose of God's choosing

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[27] Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways*, 18.

[28] In using this terminology he consciously plays off of the Moslem teaching on the five pillars of Islam, seeking to highlight what all strands of post-exilic Judaism would have agreed to as central to their faith.

[29] Mendenhall, 76, provides fair warning of this difficulty: "There is no agreement among scholars concerning the precise definition of the term 'election,' or the range of religious convictions in biblical sources to which this term may properly be applied."

-- to possess the selected people for Himself in a particular kind of relationship; and the characteristic quality of this newfound relationship between God and His people -- a special, unique and exclusive relationship, unavailable in the same measure to others. In short, election in the Old Testament entails God's freely choosing Israel to belong to Him in a unique and exclusive relationship.

1.2. Scope and Purpose of This Chapter

Our objective in this chapter is to sketch an outline of the concept of election as it emerges from the Old Testament to serve as background material for our study on Paul's understanding and use of election in Romans 9-11. To do this, we shall first touch briefly on some of the issues in this field which have exercised Old Testament scholars for the past half-century, then move on to highlight first the extensive vocabulary and diverse images for election found in the Old Testament and then the various roles played by the concept of election in Old Testament theology, and conclude with some thoughts on the relationship between election and the remnant motif.

The concept of divine election occurs in relation to objects, places, and individuals as well as to Israel, but our survey will be limited to a consideration of the national election of the people of God, for two reasons: first, this category receives considerably greater treatment in the Old Testament than all the other categories combined; and second, only this category bears direct relevance to our ultimate interest in Paul's understanding and use of election in Romans 9-11.

Although in the next subsection we will highlight the major analytical concerns and issues that have exercised modern scholarship concerning election, our survey will attempt to present a more synthetic, summary picture of election in the Old Testament, since this is undoubtedly how Paul would have viewed the Hebrew Bible and its seminal concepts. Important as they are in their own

right, questions of early vs. late traditions, patriarchal as distinct from exodus strands of thought, Deuteronomic vs. prophetic emphases regarding the role of election, and evolution of the concept over Israel's history would never have occurred to Paul. As any learned Jew of his day, Paul viewed the Hebrew scriptures as a unity and interpreted them synoptically, without regard for the structures and classifications of modern, critical Old Testament research.

1.3. Background Issues

As scholars in this century have grappled with the wide-ranging concept of election, certain issues have become focal points for discussion or disagreement. Among these, four stand out prominently: methodological approaches, the origin of the election idea, its development over the course of Israel's history, and the relationship between election and covenant. We shall consider briefly each in turn.

1.3.1. Methodological Approaches

The crucial issue in any analysis of election in the Old Testament is a determination of the scope of the semantic field to be examined. Methodologically, the major studies to date may be divided into two categories: those which see בחר as the 'election' keyword before which all other terms pale into insignificance, and those which view the concept of election as something much broader than can be designated by בחר or even a few related terms.[30]

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[30] One exception to this categorization is H. H. Rowley's work, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election*. Rowley does not deal directly with original texts throughout most of his study, and is generally more concerned with a systematization of Old Testament teaching on election and the function of the concept in the wider field of Old Testament theology than with details of linguistic usage. Early on in his analysis (p. 15) he cites Eichrodt (*Theologie des Alten Testaments* (1933), 1:196) as a support for the idea that even where the term 'election' is not used, its reality is inferred whenever the prophets speak of the deliverance from Egypt and settlement in Canaan. Thus, Rowley is not concerned with the role of בחר in the determination of the concept of election; his methodological approach is more theologically syncretistic and thus less concerned with linguistic patterns.

Of those who hold that בחר plays the central role in defining election in

the Old Testament, Vriezen provided the earliest modern study.[31] Though he

recognized various patterns of thought concerning election, he began with a

general theological understanding of the concept and moved thence to a

determination of the specific vocabulary pertinent to the theme. This approach

led him to conclude that, although there are other terms which may highlight

some particular features of election, בחר is the only verb capable of adequately

conveying the full meaning of the concept. Thus, it received his primary atten-

tion, and all other election-related terminology receded into the background.[32]

Klaus Koch, along with Vriezen, viewed בחר as the quintessential term

of election, and took this as the starting point for his study.[33] In distinction

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[31] Th. C. Vriezen, *Die Erwählung Israels nach dem Alten Testament* (Zürich: Zwingli, 1953). It is true that Quell's detailed study of ἐκλέγομαι in *TWNT* (4:148-73) came out originally in 1942, but by the nature of the work his semantic field was necessarily limited to occurrences of ἐκλέγομαι and related terms in the LXX and their counterparts in the Hebrew text, and so cannot be considered a full-fledged study of the concept of election in the Old Testa-ment. There is little doubt, however, that Quell's observation that ἐκλέγομαι serves as the pri-mary counterpart in the LXX to the Hebrew בחר (108 out of 164 possible occurrences) helped to shape the subsequent view that בחר must be the central Hebrew term for election. Quell himself argues that while other verbs may occasionally imply the concept of election, only בחר carries the sense of 'willed decision'. The associated "...words for calling, selecting, desiring, claim-ing, etc. are not religious expressions in the same strong and precise sense as בחר, so that this verb, when the subject is God, seems almost always to be a technical doctrinal term which does not need to be explained and for which there is no equivalent" (146). He concludes, "... it is only occasionally that these close expressions, even ידע, are drawn into theological or religious service, whereas בחר is in this field an obvious key to the interpretation of faith's insight into the divine work, and it thus takes on a significance extending far beyond the OT Canon. Thus the content of the belief in election in the strict sense is almost exclusively tied to this word which, because of its secular rootage, is excellently adapted to provide an interpretation of his-torical revelation" (148).

[32] Nils Dahl, in his book *Das Volk Gottes*, employs a similar methodology to that of Vriezen though his purpose is not directly a study of election, but more widely that of the 'people of God'. Instead of looking at בחר, he takes the nominal form עם יהוה as the focus of his investigations. After quoting a statement of J. Wellhausen ("Jahwe der Gott Israels und Israel das Volk Jahwes -- das ist zu allen Zeiten der kurze Inbegriff der israelitischen Religion gewesen"), Dahl comments: "Eine gewissermaßen systematisierte Theologie und Terminologie begegnet uns vor allem im Deuteronomium, aber die Sache, und z. T. auch die Terminologie ist schon vorher vorhanden und bleibt auch später" (5).

[33] Klaus Koch, "Zur Geschichte der Erwählungsvorstellung in Israel," *ZAW* 67 (1955): 205-28. It seems that Koch makes an *a priori* assumption that בחר is the only election term of note and thus simply eliminates all other verbs (not to mention pertinent nouns) from his

from Vriezen, however, he worked from a severely restricted semantic field to
formulate a general understanding of election in the Old Testament.[34] Further,
he emphasized the evolutionary development of the meaning of בחר over suc-
ceeding generations of usage.[35]

Edmond Jacob, in his *Theology of the Old Testament*, continued in this
vein by designating בחר as the *terminus technicus* for election.[36] However, he
acknowledged that there are other roots which often serve to elucidate the par-
ticular aspects of and deep motives behind the election of Israel: קרא for the
idea of calling; קנה for the idea of belonging; בדל (הבדיל) to denote separation;
קדש (הקדיש) for being set apart/holy; and ידע for intimacy in relationship with
God. Further, he briefly outlined both a variety of Old Testament images
which portray the union of Yahweh with His people[37] and the major canonical

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deliberations.

[34] Koch limits the scope of his study primarily to the Psalms, Deuteronomy and Second
Isaiah.

[35] Both Koch and Vriezen agree, however, that Deuteronomy occupies the pivotal posi-
tion in the development of the view that Israel is the elect people of God.

[36] Jacob, 201. Similarly, G. Ernest Wright, in his article "Erwählung" in *RGG* (vol. 2)
which also came out in 1958, holds that the concept of election in the Old Testament is derived
from בחר, although he allows that sometimes קרא is used synonymously (611), and that Israel's
consciousness of being chosen as the people of Yahweh may be expressed in ways apart from the
usage of בחר (612).
  Hans Wildberger in his first work, *Yahwehs Eigentumsvolk*, 108-110, and again in his
1970 article, "Die Neuinterpretation des Erwählungsglaubens Israels in der Krise der Exilszeit,"
in *Wort - Gebot - Glaube*, 307, maintains that בחר is a technical term for election, but in no
way exhausts the meaning of the concept. In the latter work, he writes: "Das Verbum [בחר] ist
eine der seltenen alttestamentlichen Vokabeln, die man als termini technici einer theologischen
Begriffssprache im Alten Testament ansehen kann....Natürlich ist aber die Sache der Erwählung
im Alten Testament älter als die Verwendung der Wurzel im theologischen Sinn und is auch,
nachdem sich die Vokabel durchgesetzt hatte, keineswegs an deren Gebrauch gebunden."
Nevertheless, he proceeds to argue that a study of בחר itself will uncover the central aspects of
the Old Testament concept of election (308) and seeks in the remainder of the article to carry out
that task.

[37] Ibid., 202-3.

terms used to denote the chosen people, arguing that each of these in its own way contributes to a fuller understanding of the divine election of Israel.[38] Jacob's succinct and evocative study opened the way for scholars to break free from the axiom that בחר was necessarily central to an understanding of election in the Old Testament.[39]

The first major monograph to follow this new methodology was a Ph.D. thesis by Robert Grant Rogers.[40] Although Rogers could still call בחר the *sine qua non* of the doctrine of election,[41] in his comparative study he considered a total of 19 potential election terms (both verbal and nominal) in the work of the Chronicler, and 22 in the Dead Sea Scrolls. From this wide linguistic base he then proceeded to compare and contrast the resulting 'theology' of election found in each corpus of literature. Rogers' approach succeeded in extending the boundaries of thought within which election could be considered, but continued to apply the same semantic, rather than conceptual, approach to the study of the idea of election in the Old Testament.

In the early seventies, Horst Seebass' study on בחר appeared.[42] Though heavily dependent on Quell for many of his conclusions,[43] he differed in one

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[38] Ibid., 203-5.

[39] We do not wish to imply that all scholarship since Jacob has tilted in this direction, but simply that the conclusions he reached have helped inspire the new direction taken up by some more recent scholars.

[40] *The Doctrine of Election in the Chronicler's Work and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Boston University: 1969.

[41] Ibid., 99. Cf. also 88, where he notes the centrality of בחר in the vocabulary of election.

[42] Cf. *TDOT* 2:73-87. This English edition was published in 1975; the German original in 1972-73.

[43] Cf. above, n31.

major respect: בחר no longer could be said to cover the range of meanings implicit in the concept 'election'. Instead, it conveys "...a relatively narrow portion of this idea when it is used in the OT to speak of Yahweh's choice of Israel to be his people, and the fundamental idea of *bhr* only rarely stands at the center of what is meant by *electio*."[44]

After a hiatus of almost two decades,[45] a new study on election in the Old Testament appeared in 1991. Written by Seock-Tae Sohn,[46] it argues forcefully that the idea of election in the Old Testament is described not simply by a few stock phrases but by a wide variety of words and metaphors. Further, each of these descriptions has its own linguistic background against which its meaning has come to be understood.[47] He states as his basic presupposition the belief that

> ...election ideas did not spring out of a vacuum. They came into being in the organic social and cultural context of the biblical community. (p. 5)

and later concludes:

> ...the idea of election is expressed by a variety of metaphors. We must understand this idea in the light of the composite picture portrayed by these various imageries. The idea of election is too vast and deep to be expressed by a single term or phrase. Rather, election is a composite idea with graphic

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[44] Seebass, op. cit., 82. He adds further (85): "...the election of the people of Israel did not attain the level of a dogmatic topic in the OT under the word *bhr*."

[45] Cf. Dale Patrick's article on election in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 2:434-35 for an analysis of trends in Old Testament scholarship which led away from the study of synthetic theologoumena like 'election' during this time period. He sums up the period from 1945-1990 as follows: "As one may surmise, after a period in which election was the center of theological discussion, it has fallen to a relatively minor subject within OT studies. Articles have appeared now and then in scholarly and theological journals, but the last three decades has seen nothing of great significance or interest. The relatively few attempts at theological synthesis in this period have found their center elsewhere..." (435).

[46] *The Divine Election of Israel*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

[47] On p. 3, he writes: "The idea of election has its origins in a variegated and changing life setting, and it is expressed in a variety of literary terms and styles."

> imagery developed from the unique life context of Old Testament Israel. (p. 100)

The bulk of this study is given over to locating these terms of election, viewing them from within the life settings in which they were used, and finally deducing the particular aspects of election thought contained in them.

We believe that the latter and more recent methodological approach provides a better avenue to understanding the meaning and role of election in Old Testament theology, not least because the Hebrew mindset tended to grasp concepts through word pictures and stories more than through abstract terminology. Hence, our overview of election in the Old Testament will rely heavily on the work of Jacobs, Rogers and Sohn.

1.3.2. The Origin of the Election Idea in Old Testament Thought

A few scholars have argued that Israel's sense of national election was little or no different from that of most nations of the ancient near east, and thus that she inherited and adapted this conviction from her neighbors.[48] Most scholars, however, find insufficient tangible support for this theory,[49] and conclude instead that her sense of "specialness" was tied to some objective realities early in her history which she interpreted as the electing love of Yahweh.[50]

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[48] So, e.g., J. M. Powis Smith ("The Chosen People," *AJSL*, 45 (1928-29), 73-82).

[49] Rowley (*Biblical Doctrine*, 18, 37) notes that while most of her neighbors felt chosen because of some innate superiority over others, Israel learns in no uncertain terms that she was chosen not because she was bigger or better than the rest, but simply because God in His grace decided to set His love upon her (Dt 7.6-7; 9.5f.). Wright argues that as far as can presently be known, no other countries of the day had an understanding of election and covenant substantially comparable to that of Israel (60-68).

[50] G. E. Wright, *OT* 49, with reference to the exodus, writes: "The doctrine of the Chosen People arose as the natural explanation of a historical fact. Israel as an oppressed minority group in Egypt was marvelously delivered, led through a bleak, inhospitable wilderness, and given a land in which to dwell....The Israelite reasoned from fact and event in the light of his knowledge of God."
Rowley, 37, argues that it does not seem credible that Israel's sense of election should rest on nothing more than her sense of self-importance. If such were the case, there would be no reason for her to invent the story that at the time of her election she was a slave nation living in

Since the work of Kurt Galling,[51] scholars generally recognize two different election traditions in the Hebrew scriptures, dealing either with God's choice of and promises to the patriarchs or with the events and revelations leading up to, including and developing from the exodus out of Egypt. Some argue for the mutual independence of these traditions,[52] others that out of an earlier exodus tradition[53] subsequent patriarchal traditions arose as a way to read the thought of election back into Israel's historical roots,[54] still others that the patriarchal traditions were earliest, out of which developed subsequent strands of election thought.[55] The primary cause of this variety of opinion lies in the disparate judgments of scholars concerning the reconstruction of Israel's early history and the dating of canonical texts.

Our purposes require only that we note in passing this debate, not seek a resolution of it, for our central concern is with how the Old Testament theme of election might have impacted the apostle Paul.

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foreign bondage. In the exodus account, no credit for deliverance is ascribed to her own activity (hence no self-glorification). Concerning the reality of the election of the patriarchs he writes (30): "Abraham's migration was a significant moment in the history of Israel's election, in which the hand of God was legitimately seen."

Rogers, 115-6, notes: "The original basis of election...was the recognition of the unique meaning of the history of the people of Yahweh among the nations."

Sohn, 5, declares: "Through their experiential knowledge of Yahweh at a certain point in history, the people of Israel became conscious of their special relationship with their God, and they tried to explain it in their everyday language, often in terms of typical human relationships."

[51] Kurt Galling, *Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels* (1928). Cf. also H. Wheeler Robinson's *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament*, chap. 11.

[52] So Galling, 37-67; Dahl, *Das Volk Gottes*, 16; Rowley, 19-33; Bright, *Covenant*, 25-29.

[53] G. E. Wright, "Erwählung," *RGG*, 2:612.

[54] So Galling, Quell, Seebass. Jacob, 205, offers an interesting twist on this idea with his dictum: "The fact of election is then earlier than the theology of election."

[55] Cf. e.g., Byron E. Shafer, "The Root *bḥr* and Pre-Exilic Concepts of Chosenness in the Hebrew Bible," *ZAW* 89 (1977), 20-42.

1.3.3. Tracing the Development of the Idea of Election in the Old Testament

As one might gather from the previous section, since there is no clear consensus over the origin of Israel's self-understanding as the elect people of God, there can be no clear consensus as to the overall evolution of her understanding. However, there are some major lines of development concerning which most scholars are agreed. Deuteronomy contains the first instance in the Old Testament of election as a concept linking Yahweh with the people as a corporate body. This, of course, does not deny the fact[56] that the notion of Israel as 'the chosen people' long antedates the Deuteronomist's striking use of בחר to elucidate this unique and exclusive relationship between Yahweh and Israel,[57] but it does underline the fact that at this point in Israel's history, a theology of election was present among some groups at least and had developed to the point where בחר became the summary term into which the various extant strands of election tradition could be gathered and abstracted.[58] In this work, the themes of election and covenant become inseparably bound together, and remain dominant, unchallenged features of Israel's faith[59] until the time of her

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[56] So Silberman, 498: "The idea of election was already widespread when the Deuteronomist introduced the technical theological term 'chosen' to express it." Bright, *Covenant*, 41, is a bit more circumspect in his phrasing, but comes to the same conclusion.

[57] So, e.g., Mendenhall, 79: "Though the religious conviction that Israel was the peculiar possession of Yahweh certainly goes back to the very beginnings of Israel, the use of the term בחור as a theological expression of this conviction suddenly appears for the first time in Deuteronomy."

[58] Rogers, 115, notes that the idea of election is not novel to Dt., but simply presented more vigorously than in previous literature. Dt. serves as the first major effort to link election (especially in a national sense) with specific historical acts, and so offers a developed sense of salvation history.

[59] Quell, ἐκλέγομαι, *TDNT* 4:163 declares: "...one may well say that next to the legally rooted idea of the covenant no statement of faith in the OT is logically clearer or more fruitful than that of election."

exile. The thundering message of the pre-exilic prophets is characterized by a challenge to the notion that election and covenant are enduring possessions of Israel regardless of her attitude and behavior toward Yahweh and his commands. As the nation marches inexorably toward doom and destruction before Assyria and Babylonia, the prophets take up the retributive theme of rejection, followed often by a hopeful word of restoration. To bridge the gap between the time of destruction and that of restoration, the prophets increasingly utilize the concept of a 'remnant', that sub-group of Israelites whom God in His mercy elects and spares to continue the lineage and serve as bearers of the divine promise to future generations of His people. The exilic and post-exilic prophets pick up the theme of restoration and blessing to Jacob (cf., e.g., Is 14.1) to reassure the nation that God has not ultimately abandoned them (they are 'the elect'), but go on to emphasize a heretofore subdued feature of Israel's election: servanthood to the nations of the world.[60] Second Isaiah in particular trumpets this theme: Israel as God's chosen Servant is to be a light to the Gentiles, leading the nations to the throne of her God. The particularism of election theology as found in Dt and other earlier sources seems now to have given way to a more universalistic outlook in Second Isaiah.[61] And yet, this lofty view of election does not carry over to the work of the Chronicler. Rogers, in his exhaustive study of election in the work of the Chronicler, concludes that without exception election is defined simply as belonging to the ethnic people of Israel,[62] or as

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[60] Jacob, 204, declares, perhaps a bit expansively: "The prophets had the sole object of giving back to the people the consciousness and sound understanding of their election, such as existed in the beginning."

[61] Rogers, 121, observes: "Many scholars are convinced that Second Isaiah represents the epitome of an election theology tempered by a universalistic concern for the rest of the world." Cf., e.g., Dahl, *Volk*, 26; Rowley, 59-66.

[62] Rogers, 134-47. Mendenhall, 80, supports this with the observation that in the Chronicler's material "...the identification of the actual historical community with the chosen people is now complete, and being chosen is equated with being a descendant of Abraham/Jacob." Patrick, 440, notes that while some of the post-exilic prophets envision the

belonging to this group *as well as* having shared in the experience of the exile. The elect are warned to remain separate from the non-elect, who include essentially all non-Israelites, and potentially all Israelites of foreign descent, or who follow heathen customs, or who do not adhere to the law of God.[63] One therefore is not justified in concluding that within the evolution of the concept of election in the Old Testament there was a consistent move along the scale from an inward-looking particularism to an outward-looking universalism.[64] Rather more accurate is the statement that particularism and universalism remained two poles around which the magnetic currents of election thought swirled and eddied, sometimes drawn to one, sometimes to the other, often polarized by tension between the two, and once in a great while existing in a calm balance of parity.

1.3.4. The Relationship of Election to Covenant

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extension of the 'chosen people' to include Gentiles, Ezra and Nehemiah pursue a contrary policy by demanding a "fencing off" of the 'pure' people from the nations through ritual laws so as to maintain Israel's distinct identity and traditions.

[63] Rogers, 134-154. He concludes (154) that for the Chronicler "...non-Israelites were excluded from the elect group. All Israelites had the possibility of being included in the elect group, but evidently not all Israelites were actually considered to be part of the elect group."

[64] *Pace* P. Altmann, *Erwählungstheologie und Universalismus im Alten Testament* (1964), 9ff. Andreas Nissen recognizes that in the actual history of Israel one cannot speak of a progression of election-thought from particularism to universalism, but he attempts to argue that one may see a *logical* progression in this direction if one distinguishes between those views which developed through human and historical accident in the interpretation and application of revelation (and thus may be categorized as *contingent* / possible theological positions) and those teachings springing from the context of divine revelation which must *necessarily* follow (cf. 45-98). The latter, he claims, show an overall ambiguity between particularity and universality, thereby negating any sense of antagonism and enabling a sense of congruence to arise instead. While an interesting approach, this study is open to the criticism that the author's own agenda is what ultimately determines what are contingent as opposed to necessary corollaries of Old Testament revelation.

The vast majority of scholars in Old Testament studies would acknowl-
edge a strong link between the themes of election and covenant with regard to
Israel,[65] but not necessarily agree on the nature of the interrelationship between
the two. Most would affirm theologically that Israel's election was the founda-
tion upon which the covenant subsequently flourished,[66] the momentous and
gracious relational decision of God to which covenant gave legal, tangible
form.[67] Jacob goes so far as to characterize the relationship of election and
covenant as parallel to that of word and sacrament in Christian thought.[68] The
primacy of election over covenant is upheld in various ways,[69] but the two
themes are so closely interwoven in Israel's theology that they share a series of

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[65] Altmann proves a notable exception to this, arguing (p.8) that covenant theology
concerns itself narrowly with the relationship between God and Israel whereas election theology
deals with the interrelationships of God, Israel and the nations. This understanding of election
theology is further promoted by his emphasis on the "dynamic universalism" inherent in Israel's
election, i.e., her growing realization that God has chosen her primarily to fulfill a special rela-
tionship to the rest of mankind.

[66] Pointing to 2 Chr 5.10 as a classic instance of the wedding of the two concepts,
Rogers (161) concludes: "The act of redemption from Egypt is the election of the people of
Israel par excellence."

[67] So C. Schedl, 493: "Der Bund ist die außere Form, in der die 'Erwählung' sichtbare
Gestalt annimt." Rowley, 38, speaks of the covenant as the sequel to Israel's election. Accord-
ing to Wright, OT, 62, "...the election of Israel was given concrete expression in terms of a
legal compact in the wilderness period." Sohn, 4: "The covenant puts election into legal effect."
He explains this further (184-86) by likening election to betrothal as the initiation of a marital
relationship and covenant to the legal binding of that relationship. Cf. also Jacob, 202, for this
same imagery.

[68] Jacob, 217. Earlier (108), he describes the divine covenant as having "...profound
roots which cannot be defined otherwise than by the mystery of election."

[69] Galling, 37, declares that the covenantal concept serves simply as a formal express-
ion to explicate the meaning inherent in 'election'; it carries no independent weight. Wild-
berger, 113, arguing against Vriezen, maintains that the reality of election precedes the
proclamation of covenantal law. Quell, 159-61, links Israel's sense of election to the earliest
divine interventions into her historical situation, and sees the covenant then as a settled affirma-
tion of these acts of God. Wright, 55, sees the covenant as a device for explaining the meaning
and nature of Israel's election. Following Galling, he asserts that covenant "...cannot be treated
independently of election, because it merely puts into concrete terms, almost metaphorically, the
meaning of the relationship involved in election. It is not in itself a redemptive act, but the
expression and confirmation of this act" (55, n17).

mutual aims and features. In particular, the link of obedience[70] to the responsibilities reflected either inherently in the varied declarations of election or explicitly in covenantal statutes demonstrates that neither Israel's election nor the divine covenant is to be seen as permanently valid regardless of her behavior. Though the idea of election refers primarily to the initiation of God's special relationship with and purpose for Israel, and covenant to the ongoing, visible bond of love and commitment between Yahweh and Israel, nevertheless as we shall see in the next section, Israel can forfeit her election and thus also her covenant relationship with God, according to various Old Testament writers.[71]

2. The Imagery and Vocabulary of Election in the Old Testament

We have accepted the position (as described above) that though the idea of election does not develop a precise and dedicated vocabulary in Israel's thought until near the time of the Deuteronomist, nevertheless the concept existed in the mindset and theology of the people from its earliest days. This

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[70] Rogers, 163, observes that the "...enactment of the covenant serves as a sign pointing to the elect status. However, beyond this symbolic meaning, the covenant is the specific way in which the elect people are reminded of their obligations as a people chosen by God....The basic requirement present in all the covenants (whenever any obligations are specified) is for the chosen people to purify themselves (whether this entails separation from the non-elect or a reinstitution of correct cultic worship) both as a witness to the elect status and as a means of guaranteeing it."

E. P. Sanders argues forcefully in *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* that rabbinic Judaism maintained this same understanding of obedience to God's covenantal commands as a means of staying within the covenant of grace, of remembering and reflecting their election by God, rather than seeing their obedience as something which would merit soteriological reward (cf. especially 75, 104-82, 235-38). The phrase 'covenantal nomism' was coined by Sanders to denote this understanding.

[71] Sohn, 4, observes helpfully that throughout the Hebrew scriptures, the main concern behind the teaching of election is not historical but existential, i.e., to emphasize the gracious nature of God's *present* relationship with Israel -- "The people of Israel looked back on what Yahweh had done for them in the past and then tried to describe and explain their relationship with him in their present situation." Cf. also Seebass, 87.

Election in the Old Testament

comes across through the use of particular images and appropriate vocabulary taken from everyday life concerns and subsequently applied to that defining moment of Israel's history. These various images serve as means to illustrate, clarify and interpret precisely how the people of Israel should understand and appropriate the reality of that historical election within their present circumstances.

2.1. The Marriage Theme

Though several different patterns of marital union are described in the Old Testament, the most standard form is that of the patriarchal marriage.[72] Here, initiative for the relationship usually belongs to the man,[73] who takes[74] his bride and establishes her as his own possession or property.[75] By publicly declaring her to belong to him, he serves notice to others that she is now under

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[72] Cf. O. J. Baab, "Marriage", *IDB* 3:279-83 for a description of the various patterns of marriage found in the Hebrew scriptures.

[73] Sometimes, initiative belongs to the parents either of the groom or bride, but never to the bride herself.

[74] The verb לקח is frequently used to denote this activity. Meaning essentially "to take," in this context it naturally acquires the sense "to marry" (cf. BDB, s.v. לקח, 4.e; Gen 4.19; 11.29; 12.19; 20.2,3). Often, לקח carries implicitly the sense of choosing or selecting (cf. Gen 6.2, where is it linked directly with בחר; Josh 4.2, with the idea of selecting men for battle; Dt 4.20; 21.11; 1 Kg 11.37; Hag 2.23). Additionally, particularly when used in conjunction with the preposition ל, it can mean "to appropriate to oneself", "to possess" (cf. BDB, s.v. *Idem.*, 4.a-c; Num 8.16; Dt 7.25; 22.7; Josh 6.16; 7.1,11,21; 2 Kg 12.6,8,9). The object of the preposition is often a reflexive pronoun, and usually indicates the person(s) who will take possession. Its purpose therefore is to signify a transfer of ownership of property to the subject. Sometimes a double ל occurs. In this formula, the first ל still signifies the transfer of ownership, and the second usually indicates the purpose behind or reason for this ownership.

[75] The term בעל is particularly suggestive here. As a noun, it can mean "owner", "husband" (Gen 20.3; Ex 21.3,22; Dt 22.22; 24.4; 2 Sam 11.26; etc.), "ruler", "lord" (cf. BDB, s.v. בעל 1.1,2,4); as a verb, it carries the sense "to marry", "to rule over." Sohn, 17, summarizes well the relational activity implied in this term: "According to the verb בעל, the marriage relationship implies that a husband becomes the owner of the woman he took, and she becomes the possession of her husband. By marriage a husband becomes a ruler, master, and owner of his wife."

his ownership, and he undertakes the responsibilities implicit in that ownership.

Often this involves carrying her away from her family home and bringing her to

his own land or domicile, furnishing her a permanent home and providing for

her needs (cf. Gen 24.67; 47.11). For her part, the bride is typically passive in

the marriage process. Her responsibilities lie in bearing children (especially a

male heir), maintaining sexual fidelity by not 'knowing' any other man, and

showing unswerving loyalty through obedience to the decisions of her husband.

Marriage is perhaps the best known image used to denote election in the

Old Testament, with Yahweh as husband and Israel His bride.[76] Almost all the

elements and terms of the marriage concept are employed throughout the Old

Testament to depict the Yahweh-Israel relationship. Even before its direct

usage by the prophets, the imagery of patriarchal marriage arises in the early

traditions of the exodus account and in Israel's understanding of God's electing

activity through that series of events. In Ex 6.3-8, Yahweh declares that He

initiated a covenantal relationship with Israel through the patriarchs, that He has

taken[77] her to be His own, and that He has promised her a land to which He

will bring her and settle her for her own possession.[78] The prophets in particu-

lar stress Yahweh's ownership of Israel, His bride, by using בעל in its marriage

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[76] This theme is also used to portray the ongoing covenantal relationship between Yah-
weh and Israel, but confusion may be avoided by limiting ourselves to texts dealing with the
initiation of the God-Israel union.

[77] The election term לקח is used to depict this relationship in Ex 6.7 (cf. also Dt 4.20).
In the aforementioned verses, לקח is paired together with the formula היה לי לעם (cf. also Dt
4.34), further emphasizing the wedding imagery behind the election envisioned here (cf. the
parallel היה לאשה in Gen 20.12; Dt 22.29, etc.).
        In Hosea, the theme of once-rejected Israel who will yet again be taken by Yahweh into
a marriage-type covenant is powerfully proclaimed (cf. chap. 2, especially verses 20, 21-22,
25).

[78] This idea is reflected in places where Yahweh is made the subject of ישב, typically in
the hiphil: He is the one who causes Israel to dwell in the land of Canaan (1 Sam 12.8), in cities
(2 Kgs 17.24,26; Ez 36.33; 54.3; 2 Chron 8.2), and in houses (Lev. 23.43; Hos 11.11; 12.10).

context (cf. Jer 31.32b; Is 54.5).[79] Yahweh has been faithful to Israel according to the covenant He initiated, and Israel is called to walk in fidelity towards Him.[80] In light of these abundant parallels, we may conclude that one major facet of election in the Old Testament is revealed through the marriage analogy: as a man takes for himself a wife according to ancient near eastern custom, so Yahweh chooses for Himself a people.

2.2. The Father - Son Adoption Theme

Adoption as a human custom is not a major theme in the Old Testament.[81] There are few specific references to adoption,[82] though the practice must have existed within Israelite society as it did in the ancient near east generally. Perhaps due to the unique societal structures developed and bound by Israel's religious perspective, the need for adoption within the nation was mitigated.[83] Nevertheless, the concept of adoption was frequently utilized by

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[79] Hos 2.18f. [E 2.16f.] is not the exception it might first appear. In a context where Israel has apparently been offering fealty to many Baals, Yahweh declares that she shall no longer use that term to refer to Him. Instead, she will call him אִישִׁי, not as a means of denying that He is her true Baal, but rather to emphasize that He alone has the right to that title which Israel has used so indiscriminately. Since in Hosea's day בַּעַל had lost its exclusivity of thought, another term is used to reclaim that exclusivity for Yahweh's right of possession over Israel as His bride.

[80] This idea of faithfulness is to be found in the use of יָדַע in Amos 3.2. Though not explicitly a marriage term, it is definitely a relational term in this context, emphasizing the close, personal relationship which Yahweh has undertaken with Israel. In Hosea, יָדַע carries stronger marital connotations, playing off the sexual imagery of Israel's adulterous affairs with the gods of other nations. In 6.3, the prophet exhorts Israel to know God alone, and in 13.4 she is commanded to love Yahweh only. These are metaphorical depictions of Israel's obligation to maintain the fidelity of the covenant relationship to which she belongs.

[81] Cf. Frederick W. Knobloch, "Adoption," *ABD*, 1:76-79 for a concise, yet detailed treatment of this practice in the Old Testament; also, C. F. D. Moule, "Adoption", *IDB* 1:48.

[82] Ex 2.10, referring to Moses' adoption by Pharaoh's daughter, and Esther 2.7,15, of Esther's adoption by her uncle Mordecai after the death of her parents. Cf. also Gen 15.2-3, where Abram accords his servant Eliezer adoptive status as heir. Even these are disputed by those who would define adoption narrowly in terms of the transfer of a party from under one patriarchal authority to that of another by whom he/she is appointed heir.

[83] Sohn, 67: "The strong tribal consciousness, the practice of polygamy, and even the

Hebrew writers to describe both the onset and continuing reality of the Yahweh-Israel relationship.

With the theme of divine adoption, as with that of divine marriage, the language and thought of covenant is central. The common covenant formula וְהָיִיתִי לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי לְעָם indicates in both cases a relational transition: Israel is brought from a position outside Yahweh's patriarchal sovereignty and care to a place within His 'familial boundaries'.[84] By adoption, God not merely takes Israel to be His own possession, separating him from the other nations (Lev 20.26), but in making him a son also appoints him heir (Dt 4.21; 32.8-9). The principal sign and seal of this inheritance is the promised land,[85] along with the privilege of being called by His name, a sign of belonging and protection (Dt 28.10; cf. also Jer 3.19). Once again, the initiative in this whole process lies completely with Yahweh as the one who actively chooses to adopt Israel. Israel is passive in this process, though called upon to respond faithfully to God as a result of this newfound relationship (cf., e.g., Dt 14.1-2).[86] In Ex 4.22-23, God publicly declares Israel His first-born son.[87] In Hosea 11.1-4,

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levirate marriage seemed to have obviated the necessity of adoption." It is a bit much to assert that Israelite society completely eliminated the need for adoption, but the elements Sohn cites certainly did help to diminish its reach.

[84] In some places, such as Jer 3.19-20, both metaphors appear side by side (even though in this example these relationships are cited in judgment against Israel for not responding as she should).

This father-son relationship between Yahweh and Israel is strongly reflected in bonds Yahweh establishes with the king, who serves in this context as the representative of the whole nation before God (cf. 2 Sam 7.14; 1 Chron 17.13; 22.10; 28.4-7; Ps 2.7; Ps 72.1ff.).

[85] Sohn, 72: "Since adoption was an expression of election, the possession of the land for Israel was the sure mark of their sonship and their election."

[86] This includes stewardship of the land, keeping it free from the pollution of idol-worship, as well as glorification of the name of God through proclamation, worship and obedient service (Dt 28.58-68).

[87] Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*, 173, views this passage as the earliest attestation of the use of father-son imagery to describe the relationship between Yahweh and collective Israel. On pp 173-175, he gives a summary treatment of the theme of the divine fatherhood of God in the Hebrew Bible.

God's fatherly love is traced back to the events of the exodus.[88] Yahweh chose,

called out of slavery, raised and nourished the people of Israel. The prophets

declare that even though Israel has been cruelly rebellious, yet God has not

finally abandoned His son. According to Jeremiah, God Himself yearned for

Israel to call Him 'My Father' (3.19; cf. Is 63.16; 64.7 [E. 8]); He will not

forget his darling child (שַׁעֲשֻׁעִים יֶלֶד -- 31.20).

This is not to say that Israel could not be rejected for some time from

divine sonship status. That Israel's adoption could be annulled is seen in the

fact that rebellious Israel is finally stripped of its privileges and the inheritance

of the land, and sent into foreign servitude once again. But the hope of the

prophets is that the same love which originally led God to choose Israel will

once again display itself as Yahweh relents from His anger and adopts Israel

once again, bringing His favored child back into the land of inheritance and

blessing.[89] The adoption of Israel by God, and the reaffirmation (or restoration)

of this adoption after a time of judgment, serves as a vivid picture of the elec-

tion love of God.

2.3. The Military Warrior/Protector - Conscripts/Protectees Theme

The idea of a king or military/tribal leader selecting able-bodied men to

fight in self-defense or in battles of conquest was known to Israel from her ear-

liest days of consciousness as a people. Such a pattern was the norm among her

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[88] Cf. also Ezek 20.5.

[89] Sohn, 72, summarizes this process well: "Since the exodus is compared to the adop-
tion of a son and the possession of the land is regarded as an inheritance, the exile equals the
rejection of sonship and the dispossession of the land. Therefore, without exception Yahweh's
rejection of Israel is equated with deportation from the land. In the same way, the restoration of
sonship means bringing back the people to the land (Jer. 12:15; 16:15; 30:3; Amos 9:13-15)."

neighbors, and Israel quickly discovered the usefulness of having an earthly king to muster and lead an army "like all the nations" (cf. 1 Sam 8.4-20, especially verses 19-20). But even prior to this development, from the time of the exodus Israel saw herself as the army of Yahweh, the "hosts" whom He had mustered for his military purposes (Ex 7.4; 12.41). Yahweh, the Lord of hosts, is often described as a mighty warrior fighting on behalf of Israel (Ex 14.25; 15.3; Dt 10.17; Ps 24.8; Is 42.13; Zeph 3.17). He is "the God of the armies of Israel" (1 Sam 17.45). Israel's enemies understand that their battle is against not only Israel but also her God (1 Sam 4.8). Likewise, Yahweh frequently affirms that a war against Israel's enemies constitutes a war against their gods as well (Ex 12.12; 1 Sam 5.1-7; cf. also Jg 6.31; 16.23-30). Hence, as Israel seeks to secure a place for herself amongst the Canaanite peoples, she finds herself embroiled in a series of battles against them and their gods. At times, Yahweh fights singularly on her behalf; on other occasions, He musters Israel as an army to do battle (cf. Num 1; Jg 7.15-18; 1 Sam 17.26,36; Ps 60.8-10; Jer 51.20). There are even times when Yahweh uses foreign nations to do battle against Israel's oppressors and so bring His good purposes to pass for Israel (e.g., Is 13.3-4). Nevertheless, Yahweh remains Israel's sole and sufficient security. He is her divine warrior, her supreme military commander. She is to trust and follow Him alone (1 Sam 17.46-47). Thus, for Israel to turn to other gods or nations for security is to betray this unique relationship with Yahweh; it is a rebellion which God refuses to tolerate. The prophets make clear that Israel's enslavement to the Assyrians and Babylonians is a result of God's rejection of His people because of her treasonous turn to false gods and international military alliances for ultimate security. Nevertheless, after these illusive supports are eradicated and Israel returns in humble repentance to Yahweh, He will restore her to her former position, and will once again serve as her protector and deliverer.

Election in the Old Testament

The primary Hebrew terms upon which the commander-conscripts imagery rests are the verbs בחר, קרא, and פקד. Although בחר is found in a wide range of contexts, it is used often in the Old Testament as a military term with the sense of levying or recruiting soldiers (cf. Ex 15.4; 17.9; 18.25; Josh 8.3; 1 Sam 17.1; 2 Sam 10.9).[90] It carries this connotation in Dt 7.6, where Yahweh's choice of Israel as His people is asserted as a means of justifying the commands in verses 1-5 for Israel to both defeat in battle and destroy the nations presently occupying the promised land. קרא occurs in two senses: "to call" and "to encounter."[91] In a military context, קרא may be used to mean "to summon" or "to appoint" on the one hand, or on the other hand "to meet in battle." It is tied particularly in the former sense to the idea of election: in preparation for war, קרא indicates the choosing or summoning by Yahweh of Israel for combat against her enemies (so Num 1.16; 26.9).[92] פקד is a verb capable of many meanings,[93] but in a military context it typically conveys the idea of mustering an army for battle. In Num 1, all Israelite males aged 20 and older are "numbered" for war at Yahweh's command.[94] In Is 13.4 the Lord of

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[90] The phrase איש בחור is used in Jdg 20.15,15,34; 1 Sam 24.3; and 2 Chron 13.3,17 to indicate men who have been chosen for war. The participle בחור is also used independently in 1 Kg 12.21 (= 2 Chron 11.1), and 2 Chron 25.5 with the same meaning. 2 Sam 10.9 is notable in using both בחר and בחור in an obviously military context:

וַיַּרְא יוֹאָב כִּי־הָיְתָה אֵלָיו פְּנֵי
הַמִּלְחָמָה מִפָּנִים וּמֵאָחוֹר וַיִּבְחַר מִכֹּל בְּחוּרֵי בְיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲרֹךְ
לִקְרַאת אֲרָם.

[91] This latter meaning derives from the instance of קרא as a parallel, developed form of קרה (cf. *BDB*, II. קרא, 896-7).

[92] Sohn, 52, declares: "Yahweh called Israel before her birth and named her, just as a military leader called his officers by name to appoint them to their special assignment."

[93] "To appoint," "to muster," to number," "to visit," "to miss;" (cf. *BDB*, פקד, 823-4).

[94] That this is not merely a census but rather a selecting of a certain group out of the whole congregation is demonstrated by the criteria to be followed in numbering process (the male gender, over twenty, able-bodied) as well as by use of the verb פקד (for strict counting, ספר would be the more natural choice), and finally the context, which indicates that Israel is

hosts is depicted as the sovereign over all the earth who musters not Israel in this case but a great multitude of nations to be the "weapon of His indignation" against Babylon on behalf of His people Israel. After this prophecy comes Yahweh's declaration that He will again "have mercy on Jacob and again choose Israel," returning them to their own land (14.1).

It is most likely that crises in Israel's early life as a nation helped shape her belief in and understanding of her election. Her pre-monarchic experience of Yahweh arose mainly through His interventions for her on the battlefield.[95] Thus, from the earliest stages of Israel's history,[96] the image of Yahweh as the divine warrior and Israel as His earthly host served to emphasize for Israel the uniqueness of her role and place in the ancient near east.[97]

2.4. The Master/Monarch - Servant Theme

Closely related to the divine warrior image is that of Yahweh as king over His chosen people, Israel. This is found as early as the accounts of the exodus, where Yahweh embraces a role toward Israel corresponding to that which Pharaoh exerted over Egypt. Israel is called עַמִּי by God for the first time as God commissions Moses to be His spokesman against Pharaoh (Ex 3.7,10).[98]

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being prepared to take the promised land by force.

[95] Cf. Sohn, 102-20, for a detailed look at texts reflecting this pre-monarchic perspective (Ex 15.1-18; Josh 5.13-15; Jdg 5.1-31; 7.15ff.), and 122 for a summary of his findings.

[96] Of course, the image of Yahweh as the divine warrior-king who fought for and reigned over Israel continued to find concrete expression throughout the monarchy period and even in the writings of the prophets.

[97] Sohn, 61: "Therefore, we can conclude that the election of Israel is the election of Yahweh's army on earth."

[98] It is illuminating that in this section announcing God's kingly possession of the people the objective forecast by God is that the people, when brought out of Egypt, shall come to Mt. Horeb to *serve God* (Ex 3.12 -- תַּעַבְדוּן אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים עַל הָהָר הַזֶּה). Also revealing is the fact in six of the instances in which the divine command is repeated to Pharaoh for release of the Israelites, the reason appended is that they might go serve God (שַׁלַּח אֶת־עַמִּי וְיַעַבְדֻנִי) -- cf. 7.16,26; 8.16; 9.1,13; 10.3).

This distinctive term of intimacy and possession occurs in Exodus 3-11 more

frequently than in any other narrative portion of the Old Testament.[99] The

notion that Israel as a people belonged to Yahweh[100] and not to any earthly king

was firmly estalished in the early monarchic period through the activity of

Samuel (1 Sam 12.22), Nathan (2 Sam 7.7-10), David (2 Sam 7.23-24) and

Solomon (1 Kg 3.8-9). When, as reported in 1 Sam 8.4-9, the people demand

of Samuel that he appoint a king to rule over them, the prophet balks, the

implicit reason being that the nation already has Yahweh for her king. This

implication is confirmed as Samuel prays to the Lord for direction and is told,

"...they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over

them" (verse 7). Yet even during Israel's monarchic period, there is no indica-

tion of her kings ever arrogating the people to themselves as royal property.[101]

The books of Samuel and Kings especially take great pains to indicate that the

people of Israel belong to God, and when God sets a human ruler in power it is

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[99] In addition to the verses noted in the footnote above, cf. 5.1; 7.4; 8.17,18,19; 9.17; 10.4; see further, 5.23; 6.7; 11.7).

[100] Yahweh declares Israel to be His סגלה (Ex 19.5; Dt 7.6; 14.2; 26.18; Ps 135.4; Mal 3.17). This is a term of ownership, and one which typically indicates the highly valued nature of the object to the owner (cf. *BDB*,s.v., 1.). It is used elsewhere in the Old Testament (1 Chr 29.3; Ec 2.8) to indicate the private wealth of a king, as opposed to the riches held in the royal treasury for the benefit of his subjects. Patrick, 438, is probably correct that this defines Israel as Yahweh's private treasure, His royal possession. The fact that סגלה occurs three times in close connection with בחר (Dt 7.6; 14.2; Ps 135.4) indicates its election associations. And its use in connection with serving God reinforces the monarch-servant theme.
    The near-synonym נחלה is also used regularly in the context of Israel's election (Dt 4.20; 9.26,29; 32.9).

[101] 1 Chr 29.14 might at first seem like an exception to this, with David at the end of his reign asking rhetorically in his prayer of blessing, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly?" But even here, the context of David's prayer indicates his complete awareness that all things, including himself and Israel, belong to Yahweh alone. Moreover, as David continues his prayer, he twice refers to Israel as "Thy people" (verses 17 and 18), demonstrating his clear understanding as to God's ultimate ownership.

"to be prince over My people Israel" (cf. 1 Sam 9.16ff.; 2 Sam 5.2; 7.8; 1 Kg
8.16; 14.7; 16.2; 2 Kg 20.5; 1 Chr 11.2; 17.7). Because God's election of
Israel as His chosen people predates the earthly monarchy, no Israelite king
could lay a counterclaim to the people.[102] Yahweh guards His possession jeal-
ously and strictly affirms His right to the undivided allegiance of his people.

Similarly, God is often depicted in the Old Testament as the master who
has redeemed Israel from slavery and marshalled her into His service. She is
His chosen servant (Lev 25.42,55), whom He has set free from servitude to for-
eign powers in order that she might now serve Him only (Jer 30.4-11; 46.27-
28). This theme reaches its culmination in Dt-Isa,[103] where Israel's servanthood
is linked unequivocally and fundamentally with her divine election.[104] The
prevalence of redemption terminology demonstrates Dt-Isa's affinity for this
master-servant imagery. As Yahweh first redeemed Israel from slavery to
Egypt and revealed His election of her for service, so now He confirms this
election by calling Israel once again to servanthood and promising imminent
redemption from her present taskmasters.[105]

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[102] So Sohn, 137: "The idea that the human king is not the ultimate owner of the
people, but that Yahweh is, is a characteristic feature of kingship in Israel. This could be pos-
sible because Yahweh's election of Israel as his people existed before the beginning of the
monarchy."

[103] It is no accident that the same section of text which highlights the master-servant
theme should also contain numerous references to God as King of Israel/Jacob (41.21; 43.15;
44.6; cf. 52.7). 44.6 is particularly interesting, for it links the kingship of Yahweh with His
function as Redeemer of Israel, thereby demonstrating the close overlap of these two themes.
God's election of Israel was a choosing of a royal servant (44.1-6). The people of Israel have
been purchased by Him, and are now His property (43.3-4,10; cf. Ps 74.2). They have bene-
fited from His lordship, and are called to serve His glory (49.3).

[104] A characteristic feature of Dt-Isa is his use of the double parallelism of Israel/Jacob
and servant/chosen (41.8-9; 44.1; cf. also 42.1; 43.10). עבד is closely linked not only with the
basic election term בחר, but also with קרא (41.9; 42.6; 43.1; 48.12,15; 49.1).

[105] For Yahweh as Redeemer, cf. 41.14; 43.14; 44.6,24; 47.4; 48.17; 49.7,26;
54.5,8; 59.20; 60.16; 63.16; for Israel as redeemed by Yahweh, cf. 43.1; 44.22-23; 48.20;
51.10; 52.3,9; 62.12; 63.9; as ransomed, cf. 43.3; 51.11.

In both the king-subject and master-servant themes the term עֶבֶד plays a

pivotal role. In roughly 80 per cent of its verbal occurrences,[106] עָבַד takes

'king' or 'god'/'gods' as its object. In its nominal form, עֶבֶד is used most sig-

nificantly of Israel as the servant of Yahweh. The service to which Yahweh

calls Israel may vary,[107] but her status as the divine servant never originates

from her autonomous choice -- it is always the corollary of her divine election.

2.5. The Shepherd - Flock Metaphor

A common metaphor depicting the relationship between leader (particu-

larly the king)[108] and people in the ancient near east is that of the shepherd and

his flock. This image was naturally applied to the Yahweh-Israel union, partic-

ularly by the prophets[109] and psalmists.[110] In terms of election imagery,

reference is often made back to the time of the exodus, where Yahweh claimed

Israel as His people and led them forth from Egypt as a shepherd leads his flock

to safety and good pasture (Pss 68.8-11; 77.21; 78.52-55; Is 63.11; Hos 11.4;

cf. also 105.43, where the theme of Israel being led forth in the exodus is con-

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[106] About 230 out of 290 times.

[107] Cf. below, 55-57, for extended treatment of this theme.

[108] Zc 11.6 provides such an example, where the shepherd of the people is none other than the king (cf. also Mi 2.12-13, where Yahweh does the work of a shepherd, gathering the remnant of Israel, and then goes before them as their king). Hence, it is not surprising that as the Yahweh-Israel relationship is often portrayed in terms of king and subject, it should also come to be symbolized in terms of the familiar and kindred metaphor of the shepherd and his sheep.
As might be expected, an affinity also exists between the shepherd-flock metaphor and that of the master-servant (cf. 1 Kg 22.17 [= 2 Chr 18.16]).

[109] Cf. Is 40.10-11; Jer 13.17; 23.1-3; 31.10; 50.6; Ezek 34.12-16,31; 36.37f.; Amos 3.12; Mi 2.12; 4.8; 7.14; Zc 9.16; 10.3.

[110] Its recurring usage in the Psalms (23.1ff.; 28.9; 68.11; 74.1; 77.21; 78.52; 79.13; 79.13; 80.2; 95.6-7; 100.3; 119.176) indicates that this common image found a secure home in the ongoing worship life of the Israelites.

tinued, and the people are characterized here not simply as a flock, but as

בְּחִירָיו, i.e., Yahweh's chosen). Although from the time of the monarchy it is

recognized that Yahweh had appointed the king to serve as His representative

shepherd over His[111] people (2 Sam 5.2; 7.7; 1 Chr 11.2; 17.6; Ps 78.71),

nevertheless, as Israel progressively slips away from her covenantal obligations

under the lamentable leadership of her political and religious authorities, the

prophets castigate those in power as false shepherds and declare God's word that

He Himself will take on full shepherding responsibility for Israel or appoint

new, trustworthy leaders (Jer 23.1-4; 50.6; Ezek 34.1-24; Zc 10.3). At times,

Israel herself is held fully responsible for repeatedly transgressing the covenant,

and the prophets consequently picture Yahweh as coming in anger to strike and

scatter the flock (Jer 30.11; 31.10; Ezek 11.16; 20.23ff. [especially verse 37];

36.19; Lam 4.16; Zc 10.9; 13.7ff.; cf. also Ps 44.12; Neh 1.8).[112] But typi-

cally following this harsh word of rejection comes the promise of restoration, a

re-election[113] of Israel to Yahweh's favor (Jer 31.10; Ezek 11.17-20; 36.22-30;

Amos 3.12; Mi 2.12; cf. Neh 1.9).

Thus, for Israel this metaphor conveyed an awareness that Yahweh had

chosen her, gathered her from the midst of her oppressor, led her forth from

danger into safety and abundant pasturage. As Yahweh's flock, Israel was both

His possession and the object of His special care.

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[111] The prophets also emphasize that Yahweh's shepherding role issues from His unique ownership both of Israel and the land in which she will be "pastured" (cf. Jer 23.1-4; Ezek 34.1-31).

[112] Yahweh can even be depicted as laying aside temporarily His vocation as shepherd of His people and taking on instead the role of a wild animal who comes to rend and scatter the sheep of Israel with none to stop Him (Hos 5.14; cf. Lam 2.10-11).

[113] This idea of re-election is especially clear in Is 14.1, where the prophet declares that after a time of terrifying judgment יְרַחֵם יְהוָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וּבָחַר עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. Also clear is the fact that this restoration to election status involves a repossession of the promised land.

2.6. The Gardener - Plant Metaphor

Typically, this characterization depicts God as a farmer who chooses a
particular vine/plant/tree and roots it in a fertile land. Israel is the plant, and
the act of taking and planting (or replanting) her represents Yahweh's election
of Israel and the settlement of His people in the promised land. The link
between divine election and promised land is forged most prominently by this
metaphor.[114]

The terms used for planting[115] bear no election significance in them-
selves, but in certain parabolic contexts where Israel is the object of divine
activity they imply the action of choosing. The song of Moses offers the first
instance of this imagery applied (here in prophetic form) to Yahweh's estab-
lishing (נטע) Israel upon His holy mountain.[116] Ps 80.9-16 reflects the usage of
this metaphor as both a reference to God's election of Israel in the exodus
event[117] -- "Thou didst bring a vine out of Egypt; thou didst drive out the
nations and plant it" (verse 8 [H :9]) -- and as a plea for God to look in favor
again upon His previously chosen vine (verses 14-15 [H :15-16]). By and
large, however, it is the prophets who use this imagery to depict the Yahweh-

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[114] Jacob, 203: "The image of the inheritance is particularly applied to the land of
Israel which Yahweh, its legal owner, gives to the people that he has chosen...." Sohn, 164,
correctly notes: "In particular, this image is closely related to the land. On the one hand, the
deportation of the people from the land is viewed as the uprooting of the vine from the vineyard.
On the other hand, the election is portrayed as the planting and the restoration as the replant-
ing."

[115] There are three Hebrew verbs which describe the activity of planting or sowing: זרע
נטע, and שׁתל.

[116] This promise is reaffirmed in the Yahweh's word to David through the prophet
Nathan: "I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them (וּנְטַעְתִּיו), that they
may dwell in their own place, and be disturbed no more" (2 Sam 7.10 = 1 Chr 17.9).

[117] This is clearly stated in Ps 44.2 (E :3) as well.

Israel relationship, and most often in terms of Israel's rejection and restoration (= uprooting and replanting). Israel was God's choice vine, chosen and cultivated to produce the sweet fruit of faithful obedience, but yielding instead a sour harvest of injustice and idolatry (Is 5.1-7; Jer 2.21; 11.17; cf. Ezek 19.10-12). Her continued intransigence in producing undesirable fruit leads Yahweh to pluck/uproot her from the fertile land of her inheritance and cast/transplant her into a foreign land (Jer 45.4; Ezek 19.13; cf. Dt 29.28; Jer 18.9f.). But alongside this declaration of rejection comes a promise of future restoration -- the plant that was uprooted will one day be replanted in Canaan, after she has been pruned and cleansed (Is 60.21; Jer 24.6; 31.27-30,40; 32.41; 42.10; Amos 9.15; cf. Hos 2.25).

Thus, we may accept the vinedresser-vine metaphor as a type of election image in the Old Testament, though with the proviso that here the idea of election is often more implicit than explicit. Additionally, this metaphor is used primarily to characterize the rejection and hoped-for restoration of Israel.

2.7. The Potter - Vessel Metaphor

This metaphor gains its associative power from the creator imagery behind it.[118] Central to Israel's theology was the belief that Yahweh had created, fashioned or formed all that exists.[119] But this truth was personalized

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[118] For a concise summary of pre-Israelite as well as biblical 'pottery' imagery, cf. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 565-66.

[119] The terms ברא, יצר and אשה are the principal Hebrew "creation" verbs. God is always the subject of ברא ("to shape, create") in its Qal form as well as the actor implied by the Niphal -- He is said to have created all that is, the heavens and the earth (Gen 1.1; 2.3; Is 45.12,18; etc.), mankind (Gen 1.21,27; 5.1,2; Is 45.12); the hosts of heaven (Is 40.26); etc. יצר ("to form, fashion") is used of both human and divine activity. With reference to the latter, God is characterized as the divine potter of the earth (Jer 33.2; cf. Ps 95.5; Isa 45.12,18), of Adam (Gen 2.7,8), of the individual generally (Is 43.7; cf. Jer 1.5), and of various natural phenomena (Ps 74.17; 104.26; Is 45.7; Amos 4.13; 7.1). עשה ("to do, make") is also used of human and divine activity, often synonymously with יצר. God is said to have made all that is (Gen 1.31; 3.1), including humanity (Pss 100.3; 119.73; Job 31.15).

All three of these verbs occur in connection with the Yahweh-Israel / potter-clay meta-

and applied to the nation of Israel in a unique way. The Maker of the earth and

all its inhabitants is Israel's God, and Israel is singled out as the object of Yah-

weh's special creative activity: He is *her* Maker (עֹשֶׂה: Pss 95.6; 149.2; Is 17.7;

29.16; 51.13; 54.5; Hos 8.14; יֹצֵר: 45.9,11), the One who created (בָּרָא) and

formed (יֹצֵר) Israel, called her by name, redeemed her and claimed her for

Himself (Is 43.1). The prophet Samuel assures the people, even after their sin

of asking for a human king, that God will not cast them aside כִּי הוֹאִיל יְהוָה

לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶתְכֶם לוֹ לְעָם.[120] In Is 44.1-2, Yahweh reassures Israel of her divine

election by appeal to the fact that He had created her and fashioned her from the

womb: כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה עֹשֶׂךָ וְיֹצֶרְךָ מִבֶּטֶן.[121] These general creation images, when

applied directly to Israel's origin by divine purpose, have explicit election

qualities. However, the election motif becomes even stronger when the general

creation language gives way to the specific potter-clay metaphor.

This metaphor is taken up in three prophetic parables (Is 29.16; 45.9-13;

Jer 18.1-10) and elements of it are referred or alluded to elsewhere (Is 30.14;

41.25; 64.7; Jer 19.11). In each of the parables, the metaphor serves to

elucidate at least the following: 1) God is the sovereign Creator who has fash-

ioned (hence elected) Israel for His own purposes, which often remain

inscrutable to Israel; 2) He, like a potter shaping clay, has the inalienable right

to fashion Israel and her destiny however He pleases; 3) Israel has no authority

to question God over His decisions;[122] 4) unlike inarticulate and malleable clay,

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phor, as will be seen below.

[120] The association of divine pleasure and intent (הוֹאִיל -- cf. *BDB*, II.יאל, 3.) with
God's creation of Israel (לַעֲשׂוֹת) emphasizes His election of the nation. This is further
underlined by the double object of the infinitive and the possessive pronoun, i.e., "to make *you*
a people for himself" (אֶתְכֶם לוֹ לְעָם).

[121] Cf. also Is 49.5, where יצר is used in an election context, this time of the servant of
Yahweh.

[122] Is 64.7 [E :8] reflects the degree of humility appropriate to her status as yielding
clay before the divine potter. Here she confesses her vulnerability and dependency before Yah-

Israel does question God and, at times, even refuses to fulfill the purposes for which God created her.

Like all the preceding election images, this metaphor also follows the election-rejection-restoration pattern. As divine election is shown in the care and planning taken by the potter to fashion his vessel for very specific purposes, so rejection is demonstrated by the image of shattering the pottery and scattering or discarding the broken pieces (Is 30.14; Jer 19.11; cf. Ps 2.9; Jer 22.28; 48.12,38). Unfortunately, this model does not lend itself easily to the idea of restoration, unless appeal is made to the image of the wet clay still on the potter's wheel, as in Jer 18.4ff. Here, a re-formation of the clay is possible even after the original vessel is spoiled, and so the possibility of restoration, at least for a limited time period,[123] is upheld. But when the imagery moves from wet, pliable clay in the potter's hands to the finished product of a fired, breakable clay vessel, then the metaphor loses the capacity to carry in a powerful way the

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weh.

[123] In this passage, Jeremiah observes the potter reworking the clay "as it seemed good to the potter to do" (verse 4: כַּאֲשֶׁר יָשַׁר בְּעֵינֵי הַיּוֹצֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת). This absolute freedom of decision on the potter's part is reflected in Yahweh's declaration in verses 7-10 concerning the general principles by which He acts in relation to the behavior of human kingdoms. In this pronouncement, freedom is given to nations as to how they will respond to Yahweh's warnings of judgment -- if they repent, they will be spared; if not, they will be destroyed. This warning is then applied to Judah (verse 11), presumably with the hope that she will respond appropriately. However, the next verse indicates God's assessment that Israel refuses to heed His calls for repentance. Then, significantly, in chapter 19.1 Jeremiah is commanded to buy a piece of pottery for use as a visual aid to the message of judgment Yahweh will pronounce through him on Judah and Jerusalem. The prophet is to take the earthen flask and break it in the sight of all the people, while saying: "Thus says the LORD of hosts: So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, so that it can never be mended...." (אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יוּכַל לְהֵרָפֵה עוֹד). This seems to be a rather irreversible decree. But as is clear from later sections of Jeremiah, restoration of Judah after her exile is clearly envisioned by the prophet (cf. 29.10-14; 30.1-22; 31.1-14; etc.). Perhaps it is most fair to say that this image does not allow for the full rhythm of the election-rejection-restoration pattern to be played out. In light of the clear prophecies of Israel's restoration which follow, we may say that the smashing of the clay vessel served to show the severity of divine judgment, but not the finality of it for all Israel. The metaphor in this case cannot carry the full weight of the divine message.

sense of restoration after rejection.[124] Hence it is not surprising that this image

of Israel as a clay pot occurs mostly in the prophetic judgment passages.

Nevertheless, the potter-clay metaphor clearly reflects the theme of elec-

tion when it highlights the activity of God both in fashioning Israel for particu-

lar purposes and in shaping the political and religious environment around Israel

to accomplish those purposes.

3. The Various Roles Played by Election in Old Testament Theology

While all of the above images reflect many similarities, yet they are used

in diverse ways to illustrate three different but interrelated roles which the

theme of election plays in Old Testament theology.[125] Israel was chosen by

grace as Yahweh's unique possession, she was chosen for a divine vocation, and

she was chosen to receive divine blessing. These roles often overlap in the

major election passages of the Old Testament, but are distinct in terms of the

theological substance which they convey. We shall investigate each in some

detail.

3.1. Chosen by Grace to Be a Divine Possession

One of Israel's earliest and most fundamental convictions was that Yah-

weh had chosen her to belong to Him through no merit of her own,[126] but rather

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[124] Construction terminology (e.g., בנה, כון) is sometimes used as an image of Israel's restoration (Jer 24.6; 31.4; 33.7; 42.10), but such terms carry the connotation of building foundations, pillars and stone work, and so do not fall within the purview of this metaphor.

[125] If Israel's sense of her special election among the nations had arisen late in her history, one would expect a clear and consistent theological explanation for this claim. Instead, we find a collection of explanations (sometimes explicit, at other times not) arising at different points in her history, suggesting again that the doctrine of election was a belief deep in the psyche of Israel from her earliest days.

[126] L. Coenen (*NIDNTT* 1:538) notes concerning the the Old Testament use of the standard election verb בחר and its participial forms: "...the part. *bāhûr*, which points rather to the quality of the object, is not used of Israel as the chosen people. Theologically, this means that the OT -- obviously quite consciously and consistently -- is concerned to avoid the tempta-

through His sovereign, inexplicable love. This is reflected both in the

Abrahamic tradition, where the Lord appears to Abram and declares His inten-

tion to bless Abram and make his descendants into a great nation (Gen 12.1-2;

15.7),[127] as well as in the exodus tradition, where Yahweh reveals Himself to

Moses and redeems a slave people who were rather insignificant by worldly

standards. But it reaches its theological zenith in Deuteronomy, particularly

chapters 4-10. Here Israel's election is said to rest not on her numerical or

military stature (7.1,7), nor on her moral behavior,[128] as if God would drive out

the nations from the promised land and settle Israel there because they were

wicked and she righteous (9.4-6).[129] The only justification given for Israel's

election and subsequent acquisition of the promised land is that "...the Lord

loves you, and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers..." (7.8; cf.

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tion of drawing attention to the importance or status of the nation. Rather it is to be directed to God's free acts of grace which indeed run counter to all human concepts of merit. For this reason the other participial form *bāḥîr* is used...."

[127] Patrick, 436, observes that although Genesis does not use בחר in connection with the divine promise to the patriarchs, nevertheless "...it does depict YHWH's singling out one person and people for a special destiny."

[128] Of course, this idea is not limited to Dt. Ezek 16.4-6, for example, portrays the reality of God's love for Israel despite her lack of beauty or desirability.

[129] The point of these texts seems to be that Yahweh does not choose the objects of his affections according to natural human tendencies. Whereas human nature seeks out and rewards with affection that which 'merits' attention (i.e., the "biggest and best"), God instead typically seeks out the weak and lowly, those least in the position to assume they might be worthy objects of God's love (cf. 8.17). In Dt 7.7, Israel is explicity told that she was "the fewest of all peoples" (cf. 7.1), and in 9.5 it is affirmed that even though the nations being driven out before Israel are wicked, Israel must not conclude that she is being rewarded on the basis of some righteousness of her own (9.4). Indeed, her record is just as black as theirs, if not worse. Israel after all has had the benefit of God's protective care and clear, moral direction, yet she has been a defiant and unfaithful partner. To drive home this point, Moses speaks explicitly of Israel's unrighteousness toward God in verse 6 ("Know therefore, that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness; for you are a stubborn people") and then supports this with an extended narration of Israel's chronic rebellion in the wilderness (verses 7-29). Thus, God's choice of Israel rests upon the mystery of His free love, extended according to an election of grace, not elicited by any positive qualities in the recipient, but wholly generated and expressed according to His sovereign purposes.

6.10,18-19,23; 9.5).[130]

Thus, one answer to the question "Why has God made Israel His chosen people?" is that God loves the descendants of the patriarchs.[131] But this leaves us with the same question in another form: "Why does God *love* Israel?" The Deuteronomist answers: "Because He is fulfilling His vows made to the patriarchs to love and bless their descendants" (cf. 4.37; 10.15).[132] But if God's election of Israel through the exodus event is necessitated by prior oaths to Israel's forebears, is this really an election of free grace or something to which Israel has an inalienable right? The answer depends on the nature of the original promise made to Abraham and repeated to Isaac and Jacob (cf. Gen 12.1-3; 26.24; 28.13-15). As we have already noted, the Genesis accounts highlight the initiative of God in singling out first Abraham, then Isaac and Jacob, and subsequently promising them a multitude of descendants, the blessing of a land of their own to enjoy, and His own abiding presence. God makes these promises unilaterally -- the patriarchs are portrayed as passive recipients in this regard.[133] The Deuteronomist picks up this theme, depicting Yahweh's

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[130] As we have seen particularly in the marriage, father-son and shepherd-sheep metaphors, the compassionate love of Yahweh for Israel proves to be a prominent pillar upon which her election rests. God has pity on her, and tends and cares for her as His cherished property (Ex 2.24; 6.5; Dt 7.7; Ezek 16.1-14; Hos 11.4; cf. 2 Kg 16.23; Is 14.1; 54.7-8; Jer 12.15; Mic 7.19; Zc 10.6).

[131] Another possible inference from Dt 9.4-6 is that God has chosen Israel as His means of punishing the Canaanite nations for their wickedness. However, the fate of Israel's predecessors in the promised land is never a major theme for the Deuteronomist, except as Israel's holiness is linked with her avoiding the practices which characterized those tribes. Typically, Israel's election is viewed positively as a fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs, or as a declaration of Yahweh's intent to bless Israel, rather than negatively as a means of rejecting other people groups, though this is sometimes secondarily implied.

[132] A variation on this theme is found in 2 Kg 19.34; 20.6 and Is 37.35, where God promises to act on behalf of Israel for His own sake as well as the sake of His servant David.

[133] Of special significance is the covenant ceremony related in Gen 15.7-12,17-19. Here God actively binds Himself in a covenant with Abraham to fulfill the promises He has previously made. Abraham, on his part, has a purely passive role, a spectator in a trance observing the oath God takes to fulfill His unconditional promises.

unprompted oath-taking in terms of His love toward the patriarchs. God in

absolute freedom chose to set His love[134] upon Abraham, and again freely to set

His love upon Abraham's descendants. Thus, in the same way as the

patriarchs' election is characterized by grace, so also is that of their off-

spring.[135]

Other Old Testament writers offer a more fundamental reason for God's

election love for Israel. Since the answer is not to be found in Israel's merit, it

must lie in God's desire to glorify Himself. Thus, we are told that God loves

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[134] The use of אהב in this context emphasizes the thought of election. Though
generally אהב is very common in Hebrew and capable of signifying all kinds of love, when it
occurs with God as subject, Israel is almost always its object. It principally denotes the love of
a superior for an inferior (interestingly, the root never describes the love of a wife for a husband
or a child for a parent), and carries the sense of "ardent and voluntary desire" (Jacob, 108; cf.
Snaith, 131-4). Thus, to say that God loves Israel is to allude to the fact that as the superior,
God chooses to initiate and continue such a relationship with Israel, who always remains in a
subordinate and dependent position.

The fusion of the ideas of desire and election in אהב is further indicated by its antonym,
שנא, which is used on a human level to indicate outright hatred or rejection as well as to charac-
terize the non-favored status of one wife in the eyes of her bigamous husband (cf. Gen 29.31; Dt
21.15-17). With reference to divine-human affairs, it occurs most prominently in Mal 1.2-5,
which contains particularly virulent language in association with God's non-election / rejection
of Edom and contrasted with His love and election of Israel. This idea is carried forth generally
among the prophets, where Yahweh's enduring love for Israel is often contrasted with His
hatred for and coming judgment upon the neighboring nations (cf. Isa 15-19.15; Jer 46-51; Ezek
27-32, 35, 38; Obadiah).

[135] Dt 10.14-15 underlines this by noting that although all creation (i.e., humanity)
belongs to God, nevertheless Yahweh "set his heart in love" upon Israel's forebears (רַק בַּאֲבֹתֶיךָ
חָשַׁק יְהוָה לְאַהֲבָה בָּם), and also "chose their descendants after them" (וַיִּבְחַר בְּזַרְעָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם בָּכֶם אֹתָם
מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים) from among all the peoples of the world. Implicit in this choosing of Israel is the
rejection of the other nations, at least at that point in time. Egypt faced plagues and the decima-
tion of her armies in the process of Israel's exodus. In the wilderness, Arad, the Amorites under
Sihon, Og and the people of Bashan, and the Midianites of Moab all met devastation on the
battlefield against Israel (Num 21, 31). The seven nations occupying the promised land are to be
driven out of Canaan and exterminated (Dt 7.2-5; 9.3-4). Israel has favored nation status before
Yahweh; she alone is a 'holy people' chosen לִהְיוֹת לוֹ לְעַם סְגֻלָּה מִכֹּל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה
(Dt 7.6).

Also implicit in this text is the thought that God's election of the patriarchs was not
something predictable -- it stemmed completely from divine grace. As Snaith notes concerning
Dt 10.15, the restrictive adverb רק is "...used regularly for exceptions and for introducing what
is contrary to expectation" (135). He concludes, "The one thing of which all Old Testament
writers are certain is that God's love for Israel was not because of anything that Israel had done
or was" (135).

Israel for His own sake / for the sake of His name. He unilaterally binds the

honor of His name with the destiny and character of Israel (cf. 2 Kg 20.6; Ps

23.3; 25.11; 31.3; 44.26; 79.9; 106.8; 115.1; Is 43.21,25; 48.9,11; Jer

14.7,21; Ezek 20.9,14,22,41-44; 36.22). Further, verbs of pleasure or delight

are used in conjunction with God's election of Israel. God is said to have

attached (חָשַׁק) Himself to Israel in love (Dt 7.7; 10.15), to delight (חָפֵץ) in her

(Is 62.4),[136] to be pleased (רָצָה) with her (Ps 44.4; 149.4; cf. 1 Chr 28.4), to

resolve / determine with pleasure (הוֹאִיל) to make her His people (1 Sam

12.22). Additionally, there is often a sense of divine good pleasure implicit in

the usage of יָדַע to describe Yahweh's election of Israel -- it pleased God to

enter into a relationship of intimacy with Abraham and his descendants (Gen

18.19; Hos 13.5; Amos 3.2),[137] and to fashion a people who should respond

appropriately to His love.[138]   Beyond this is mystery,[139] for the fact that Israel

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[136] In this context, the delight of Yahweh over Israel is likened to the joy of a young man with his new bride. The imagery gains force from its regular use as an election metaphor.

[137] Even in Amos 3.2, where the context is one of wrath against Israel for her repeated iniquities, the extent of Yahweh's anger against the chosen people reflects the depth of love He has held for her ever since 'knowing her', and the distress rather than delight which she has brought to Him in return. Israel is held responsible for her disobedience, and punished along with the other nations (9.7). Yet this does not contradict the fact of Israel's specialness before Yahweh (*pace* Patrick, 438), for in the next verse (9.8) God makes clear that through His judgment He will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, although the other sinful kingdoms named are to be annihilated (cf. also 5.3).

In his harsh message of judgment and doom, Amos uses the remnant concept, sometimes to indicate the utter meaninglessness and ineffectiveness of the remaining group as a sign of Israel's continuing life (3.12; 4.1-3; 6.9-10), and other times to stress the smallness in number of the survivors in the face of their enemies (5.3), but always to challenge the popular belief that Israel would forever continue through a remnant, forgiven by God for all her sins because she had been chosen by Yahweh for a glorious future. Yet the prophet's intentions are salvific (cf. 5.4-6,14-15; 9.8b-15). As Hasel, 190, notes: "...Amos intends to do more than destroy Israel's false hopes. He confronts Israel in such a radical way in order to shake her our of a false sense of security, to bring to her attention her desperate situation before Yahweh, to warn her of the real danger of complete destruction, and to provoke reformation."

[138] An ancillary purpose behind God's election of Israel (though it does not address the issue of particularism) is that of fellowship. God chooses and loves a people with the expectation that they will fully respond with heartfelt gratitude and obedience. So Quell, 162-3: "What interest has God in Israel's greatness? one might ask. His whole concern is with righteousness and fidelity. The only point of His fellowship with Israel is that of all fellowship: Faithfulness for faithfulness' sake." This, it seems to us, falls more naturally under the umbrella of election

should belong to God in a way different from any other peoples rests ultimately in the private counsels of Yahweh's sovereign will and purpose.

Israel's status as a divine possession not only defined her relationship to Yahweh; it also distinguished her with regard to the world around her. As the people of God, she was called to be separate and distinct from (הבדיל: Lev 20.24; 1 Kg 8.53) her pagan neighbors, to live with a different viewpoint[140] and according to a different standard (Lev 20.26; Dt 14.2; Amos 3.2). Use of the verb בחר in an election context almost always highlights this distinguishing between Israel and the rest of the nations.[141] Since Israel belongs to God, she is

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as divine vocation, and so will be dealt with in the next section.

[139] Quell, 168: "The one thing which remains vital in the OT concept of election is the element of the mysterious and inexplicable which Dt. expresses in the words: 'He has loved you.'" Cf. also Wright, "Erwählung," 611.

Snaith contends that the main feature of God's love for Israel is that it is an unconditioned, sovereign love (134). Concerning the connection between God's glory and His love for Israel, he concludes, 136: "Often these writers say 'for His Name's sake', for they scarce know what else to say. They meant that Jehovah loved them, because that was what He was like."

[140] In Ex 19.5-6, Israel is called 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation', indicating the new orientation which she as a people is to maintain.

[141] *Pace* Quell, 147, who agrees that Yahweh knew only Israel in distinction from all other peoples, but argues concerning בחור that "This volitional element is not present, however, without the partitive particles [רַק and מִן]." Interestingly, he notes elsewhere (148-9) that בחר normally denotes a complicated rather than simple act of will (for which latter the Hebrew term is אבה), so that he who chooses "...decides in favour of one of many possibilities and rejects the others (מאס)." We would therefore affirm that the volitional element is always present with בחר, but brought to the fore when used in conjunction with רַק or מִן. The emphasis on particularism or universalism with regard to Israel's election seems to rest more on the role (as seen by a particular author) that Israel plays in the purpose of God: e.g., when בחור is used with reference to Israel as God's special possession, then it does seem to indicate the rejection of all other nations in favor of Israel. However, when used of Israel as the divine Servant, then it simply points to Israel's special vocation *in distinction to* the other nations, and does not necessarily imply the idea of rejection. Thus, we find Jacob's dictum (109; cf. also Rogers, 89), "The election of one does not *ipso facto* involve the disapproval of the other...," deceptive in its oversimplification.

Seebass likewise errs in seeing Israel's election only in terms of her role as servant for the world. He correctly notes that when used in relation to persons, בחר "...denotes choice out of a group (generally out of the totality of the people), so that the chosen one discharges a function in relationship to the group" (82-3). But he incorrectly assumes that in the case of Israel's election this function *always* consists in her being chosen to serve greater mankind in a positive way. Thus, he wrongly concludes: "The horizon of the election of the people of Israel is the peoples of the world, in relationship to which as a whole the 'individual' Israel was chosen. *bhr* as a technical term for the election of the people of Israel stands under the symbol of

to follow His lead and to reflect His righteous ways, becoming a 'holy people'

(Ex 19.6; Dt 7.6; 14.21; 26.19; 28.9) .[142] This leads us to a second major role

played by election in Israel's theology.

3.2. Chosen for a Divine Vocation

There are some scholars who hold that the purpose of Israel's election

lies entirely in her selection for service.[143] But, as we are attempting to

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universalism."

Patrick's argument that with Israel's election other nations were not so much rejected as passed over, "...to be beneficiaries of election at the denouement of history" (439), also seems less than adequate. It would be difficult to find in Israelite theology the idea that all the tribes of the earth, including those she was commanded to obliterate in settling or defending the promised land, would ultimately benefit from Israel's election. There are indeed some universalistic hints in Isaiah that the nations extant at the denouement of history would enjoy the blessings of election as well as Israel (cf. 55-57 below), but even within the post-exilic writings there is a counter-current which emphasizes the division of humanity into elect and reprobate. In Ezra-Nehemiah, this distinction is drawn along purely ethnic lines: Israelites alone (or sometimes only those returned from exile, who affirm the principles and practices determined by the leadership) may be considered the elect; the nations are by definition excluded as enemies of the elect (Neh 5.9), and Israel is to remain separated from them (Ez 9.1; 10.11; Neh 9.2; 10.28; 13.3). [For detailed treatment of this topic, cf. Rogers, 147-154, 165-6.] This theme is carried forward increasingly in Jewish intertestamental writings (cf. Ass Moses 1.12 and 4 Ez 6.55,59, where the thought that God created the world for the sake of the Jews comes to expression). But elsewhere, the distinction between elect and reprobate begins to make itself felt even within the ethnic borders of Israel. Patrick, 440, notes that in Third Isaiah we find "...the beginnings of the reconception of election on a non-national basis." A discrete group within Israel is spoken of as 'my chosen' (65.9,15,22) or 'my servants' (65.8,9,13-15). Over against this are the Israelites who have proven themselves faithless and arrogant (65.1-7). Salvation is promised to the former, elect group, while the latter are threatened with punishment. The development of such a view in light of the eschatological day of judgment leads to passages such as Dan 12.2, where some are delivered to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting contempt. This approach characterizes the Qumran literature, as we shall see in the next chapter.

[142] Patrick, 436, notes how the doctrine of election provided a bonding for individuals to the nation: "The concept of election made explicit the unique value of belonging to this people. No other nation had been so favored by the one Universal God (Deut. 10:14-14, etc.); thus, it would be foolish, even suicidal, to renounce one's obligations to the relationship."

[143] Vriezen, for example, can write: "Die Erwählung ist im A.T. immer die Sache Gottes seiner Gnade, und entholt für den Menschen immer einen Auftrag; und nur von diesem Auftrag aus darf der Mensch die Erwählung Gottes erfassen" (109). Rowley is even more dogmatic: "Whom God chooses, He chooses for service. There is variety of service, but it is all service, and it is all service for God. Whom God destroys, He finds no longer serviceable" (42). "Election is for service. And if God chose Israel, it was not alone that He might reveal Himself to her, but that He might claim her service" (43). Rowley alludes to the potter-clay metaphor, arguing that it "...only supports the view that the Divine election concerns exclusively the Divine service" (42). This theme dominates all that Rowley

demonstrate in this chapter, the vocabulary and images of election point to a multiplicity of roles for the doctrine of election in Israel's life: service is indeed a major one, but not the only one.

When one thinks of Israel's servanthood and election, immediately the mind jumps to the servant passages in Is 41-49, and understandably so, for this well-known material links the two most clearly and powerfully. However, before turning to it, we shall look at some other passages which consider divine service from a different vantage point.

As we have already seen above (section **II.4**), service vocabulary is not limited to Dt-Isa. עָבַד is found repeatedly, for example, in the formative election passages of Exodus as God demands of Pharaoh the release of His people so that they might serve Him in the wilderness (3.12; 4.23; 7.16,26 [E: 8.1]; 8.16 [E: 8.20]; 9.1,13; 10.3,7,26). The service to which Israel is called here has nothing to do with other nations;[144] rather, it is a service toward Yahweh alone. The close interconnection in this context of עָבַד with חגג and זבח (cf. 5.1-3) as well as the fact that Israel's service at Mt. Horeb (cf. 3.12) essentially comprised her acts of worship and response before Yahweh indicate that, in the exodus tradition, the divine vocation to which Israel had been called consisted largely in her worship, festal celebrations, and sacrifices. This sense is continued in Dt, where serving God is held in parallel with fearing and loving and cleaving to God, as well as walking in all His ways and keeping His command-

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has to say about Israel's election.

Patrick, 435, is a bit closer to the mark with his assertion: "Election is a concept which was implicit in the stories Israel told of its origins and vocation." We would add to this the categories of stories dealing with her present blessing and future destiny.

[144] Indeed, the nations as a rule are excluded from it.

ments (6.13;10.12; 11.13; 13.4). עבד is used in Dt primarily with a divine

referent, either Yahweh or the gods of the pagan nations,[145] and so indicates

god-ward service, i.e., worship and devoted obedience to the covenantal obliga-

tions.[146]

It is only when we turn to the Dt-Isa that we come to a new understand-

ing of Israel's divine vocation as servant. Her holiness before Yahweh is no

longer intended to build a fence between her and the rest of the nations, but

rather to be a means of reaching the world and drawing it to the Lord. As the

servant of Yahweh, Israel is called to be a witness to the salvation and glory of

her God (43.10,21; 44.8; 49.3). Teaching on election is in the forefront of the

prophet's message as he seeks to reassure the people in light of the exile that

God has not ultimately abandoned them (41.8-9; 43.1-2; 44.1-5; 45.4; 49.15).

But he asserts as a corollary to this election a new twist in Israel's role as ser-

vant -- she must now assume positive responsibilities as God's helper for the

redemption of the world. She is designated a light to the nations (42.6-8).

Israel's restoration will of course benefit her greatly, but it will also serve as an

illustration and invitation to which the nations are encouraged to respond. By

her example and activity, Israel is to lead the nations to worship on Mt. Zion.

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[145] Israel is repeatedly warned against serving other gods . Her election by Yahweh means that He alone has right to her full, undivided allegiance and response.

[146] It is instructive in this regard to note that Dt, which many scholars regard as the book of election theology *par excellence*, remains firmly particularistic (*pace* Quell, 164, who seeks vainly to find a basis for universal salvation history in the fact that Dt portrays history as the place of divine revelation). If we may say that the Deuteronomist considered Israel divinely elected to service, we must qualify this at once by recognizing that this role involved a faithful 'servicing' of the covenant, a tending to the relationship which God had established with Israel, and not in any sense a universalistic call to proclaim divine grace to the nations. Rogers, 118, is accurate in affirming that "Deuteronomy presents an understanding of election which is centered on the welfare of a particular people. There is no attempt to project the necessity for any relationship with, or mission to, the rest of the peoples of the world. God was indeed seen to be Lord of the universe, but he bestows his favors on Israel alone. Israel exists only for the sake of God and for herself."

Here the particularism of election so notable in Ex and Dt recedes in the face of prophetic glimmers of an election which spans all nationalities and will see all peoples in the end gathered around the throne of God (2.1-4; cf. Zc 8.21).[147] So in the prophets we find some indications (by no means uncontested, however) of one way in which God would fulfill the original Abrahamic promise of Gen 12.3 -- וְנִבְרְכוּ בְךָ כֹּל מִשְׁפְּחֹת הָאֲדָמָה. The blessing of Abraham's election would be imparted to the nations as well through Israel's gracious service, which itself was mandated by her divine election.[148]

3.3. Chosen to Receive Divine Blessing

In the rush by some theologians to characterize Israel's election as one of service, it is sometimes overlooked that in saying "Israel was blessed in order to be a blessing" (cf. Gen 12.2) one must affirm antecedently that this election entailed her being a recipient of divine favor.[149] In Abraham's call, God prom-

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[147] So Quell, 167, rightly perceives: "The unique combination of particularism and universalism in the belief in election, the insight that the God who chose a small national community because He loved it is God in the true sense as the Holy One and the Lord, is developed with increasing clarity in exilic prophecy to the point where the nations who do not yet know Him will learn to do so."

Speaking particularly of Is 19.19-25, Patrick (439) notes that "The language once used to set Israel apart from the nations will be addressed to them; the election of Israel reaches its true end in the election of all nations." Cf. also Is 45.20-25.

[148] The fact that in Gen itself the formulaic phrase וְנִבְרְכוּ בְךָ כֹּל מִשְׁפְּחֹת הָאֲדָמָה appears (with minor variation) five times (12.3; 18.18; 22.18; 26.4; 28.14) indicates that even here the call of Abraham envisions a central role for the chosen people in the manifold divine blessing of humankind. Wright, OT, 51, comments on this phrase: "Through the ancient conception of blessing the writers are saying that God's purpose is to use Israel for a universal blessing." However, at this point the thought is not yet developed into any kind of universalistic election theology.

[149] Rowley, for example, notes (66) that Gen 12.3 demonstrates that the blessing of Abraham is what is inherited in election, and that God's purpose is to spread that blessing among the families of the earth. In his desire to stress the idea that 'all election is for service', he fails to give sufficient weight to the fact that the election of Israel also entails receiving and enjoying the blessing of Abraham as a part of God's gracious purpose. This is particularly clear in his interpretation of Ezek 36.22-25 where, he says (78), "...election is called forth by nothing in Israel, but is directed to service." Yet this passage says nothing of Israel's intended service to the nations; instead it emphasizes God's renewing of Israel and pouring out of manifold blessings upon her (verses 24-38) so that the nations will no longer be able to profane Yahweh's

ises to make him a great nation, to bless him, to make his name great, and to

cause him to be a blessing. Though the content of God's blessings toward Israel

vary according to historical context, the fundamental, favorable relationship at

the heart of these blessings remains relatively steadfast.[150] It is this positive

relationship to which the divine blessing of Israel principally points (cf. Is

65.23).[151]

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name (verses 22-23). God's restoration of Israel here has nothing to do with a call to service, but rather with a divine desire to vindicate His name and as a result to bless Israel abundantly. Rowley attempts to sidestep this by arguing that Israel's election "...is a service that is directed towards the nations, though less to convert them than to impress them with the greatness and the power of God, and a service that is rendered not by conscious effort on the part of Israel, but simply by enjoying in faithfulness the blessings which God showers upon her" (78). But surely it is a distortion of thought to maintain that Israel's 'call to service' is seen in her "unconscious effort" of enjoying the blessings which God showers upon her. Israel plays no active role in this at all; she simply becomes a showpiece for God's mercy, demonstrating thereby her divine election to blessing.

Even within the servant role of election there is room for the idea of divine blessing for service well-rendered. Rowley implicitly recognizes this, but downplays it in his effort to exalt Israel's call to servanthood. God's choice of Israel "...was election for service; and the rendering of that service was the supreme honour for which she was chosen. Not for His own sake, but for hers, that she might attain the goal of her high calling, God desired her to yield to that service, and His love was frustrated until she yielded it" (54). What, one wonders, is the 'supreme honour' attached to the attainment of the goal of her high calling which she is to accomplish for her own sake, not God's? Rowley seems to hint at what we would assert outright: that God's purpose in Israel's election entails far more than her service, important as that is; He calls her to be blessed, to effect through His ongoing grace the goal of her high calling, and ultimately to enjoy eternal blessing and reward when His plans are fulfilled.

[150] This is not to deny, of course, the validity of the blessing/curse structure built into Yahweh's covenant with Israel linked as it is with her duty to obedience, nor the fact that Israel does in fact enter times of being under God's curse and suffering His rejection due to her irresponsibility in the face of her election. However, as the election-rejection-restoration theme illustrates, God's gracious attitude toward Israel persists in spite of these hurdles -- He maintains His original elective purpose of blessing Israel (cf., e.g., Obadiah 17b). Among the exilic and post-exilic prophets, this perspective begins to take on eschatological overtones, and Israel's election is seen to entail eternal blessings.

[151] K. H. Richards ("Bless/Blessing" in *ABD* 1:754) observes: "The primary factor of blessing is the statement of relationship between parties. God blesses with a benefit on the basis of the relationship."

Scharbert, 288, likewise describes the act of blessing as "...always a manifestation of an intimate relationship with the one for whom it is intended, or an acknowledgment of communion with him...."

Viewing the covenant as a concrete means of expressing the meaning and nature of Israel's election, Wright, *OT*, 58, argues that Yahweh graciously offered Israel this covenantal relationship, which was full of advantages for her. Acceptance of it "...meant the bestowal of blessing from Yahweh, a blessing which included the gift of an 'inheritance,' security from enemies, law and order -- indeed the wholesome and harmonious existence comprehended by the

This blessing of Abraham[152] is passed on to his descendants, first
through Isaac's blessing of Jacob (Gen 28.4), then through Jacob's blessings
upon his sons (Gen 48.8-49.28) and finally through the events of the exodus and
settlement of Israel in Canaan. Among the prophets, the blessing of Yahweh is
tied most clearly to election in Isaiah. In 44.3, God assures a shaken Israel of
her election by promising the blessing of His Spirit ("my Spirit upon your
descendants" = "my blessing upon your offspring") to the posterity of Jacob.
With reference to the eschatological future, Yahweh speaks of His chosen ser-
vants as "the blessed of the Lord" who enjoy the intimacy of God's presence
(65.23-4), and portrays the new Jerusalem as a place of rejoicing, peace and
plenty. And finally, in line with Isaiah's universalistic slant, 19.19-25
demonstrates that Israel is not the only nation elected to eschatological blessing
-- Egypt and Assyria are spoken of in election terms on a par with Israel
("Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel
my heritage" [verse 25]) and promised the same gracious relationship.

An emphasis on blessing is also to be noted particularly in the election
metaphors of husband-wife, father-son and shepherd-sheep. Yahweh is the one
who rescues Israel and cares for her. From her beginning as an abandoned baby
right up through her young adulthood, God cares for her, and then takes her as
his wife, bathing and anointing her with oil, clothing her with beautiful raiment

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Biblical conception of peace (*shalom*)." But Israel's acceptance also obligates her to obey the
terms of the covenant, set out clearly in the law. Yet these were not seen primarily as a legal
burden to be borne. "They were founded in a Divine act of grace; they were God's gift of life."

[152] It is not quite accurate to say that none of the promises to the patriarchs is called a
'blessing' (*pace* Scharbert, 294) for in Gen 28.4 Isaac desires that the blessing of Abraham
should belong now to Jacob and his descendants, and he frames this blessing in terms of Jacob's
possessing the land which God originally gave (i.e., promised) to Abraham (cf. also Is 51.2).
Nevertheless, Scharbert is correct in seeing that God's blessing is inherent within the prospect of
the promises made to the chosen people.

and precious jewelry, feeding her rich food (Ezek 16. 4-14). Yahweh (like an

eagle fluttering over her young) is depicted as the parent who 'encircled Israel,

cared for him, and kept him as the apple of His eye', after finding Israel 'in the

howling waste of the wilderness' (Dt 32.10-11). Israel, as Yahweh's adopted

child, is given a special inheritance. Finally, Yahweh, as the true shepherd,

rescues His sheep from where they have been scattered, leads them back to the

fold, feeds them with good pasture, binds up the injured, and keeps them all

safe (Ezek 34.11-16).

The divine blessing upon Israel is characterized throughout most of the

Old Testament in terms of an earthly bonanza (the land of milk and honey,

regular and abundant harvests, fecund flocks, countless descendants, etc.). But,

starting with the post-exilic prophets and on through the intertestamental litera-

ture, the shift toward an eschatological viewpoint increasingly moves the

emphasis away from present, earthly benefits toward end-time blessings which

take on a more ethereal, other-worldly nature. Israel's belief in her own elec-

tion intensifies this hope in a way which surpasses that of the pagan religions of

her day.[153]

4. Election and the Remnant Theme

In relation to election, the remnant theme in Old Testament theology

developed as a bridge between rejection and restoration motifs. Expressed

through five principal Hebrew roots and their derivatives,[154] the remnant idea

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[153] Galling, 93, notes: "Das Verlangen des Erwählungsglaubens nach Sichtbarwerdung
hat der israelitischen Eschatologie jene eigentümliche Intensität gegeben, die sie bei keiner
anderen Religion besitzt, und die dann auch dem Urchristentum den entscheidenden Stempel auf-
gedrückt hat."

[154] The most prevalent as well as theologically important term is שאר (occurring with
its derivatives 223 times in the Old Testament), followed by יתר (103 times), פלט (80
times), שרד (29 times), and אחר (occasionally the nominal form אחרית designates a remnant).
These terms are often used in combination or parallel, indicating a proximity of meaning defined
generally as "remnant/rest" (cf. Herntrich, 196, for a detailed list of occurrences), though indi-

covers a wide range of situations involving things "left over" or "remaining."[155]

The remnant motif occurs in conjunction with all sorts of threats and dangers,

and thus it is wrong to assume that it arose originally in a military context.[156]

Nor is the theological use of the concept original with or limited to the

prophets.[157]

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vidually פלט carries the sense of escape through deliverance, שרד that of terror and flight, and אחר that of residue.

Hasel, 386, notes that "...the derivatives of š'r represent the focal point of the terminological expression of the Hebrew remnant motif. Derivatives of plṭ/mlṭ, ytr, 'hr cluster to a larger or smaller degree around this focal point. The Semitic cognates of the Hebrew root š'r emphasize in the majority of cases the remaining part without any reference to or implication of the loss of the larger whole or balance." Hasel's detailed research overturns the earlier conclusions of Eric W. Heaton ("The Root שאר and the Doctrine of the Remnant," *JTS*, N.S., III (1952), 27-39; cf. especially 28), who argued that Semitic parallels demonstrated that שאר carried intrinsically the sense that what remained was of less importance than that which had been removed.

[155] It may denote land left to be taken in battle (Josh 13.1) or nations remaining in the land (23.4,7), food residue (1 Sam 9.24), remaining strength or breath (Dan 10.8,17), trees left in a forest (Is 10.19), wood left over after domestic usage for the carving of an idol (Is 44.17, 19), etc.. But most often, and of direct relevance to our subject, it is used as a description of that group of people which survives destruction, usually due to natural calamity, warfare or direct divine judgment.

[156] *Pace*, e.g., Sohn, 217-8. While it is true that פלט and שרד often reflect the circumstance of war, שאר in particular has such a wide range of uses in various traditions that it may not be characterized so succinctly.

[157] The third section of Hasel's book (135-215) focuses on the remnant motif in the Old Testament up to the time of Isaiah. His well-documented arguments both demonstrate the existence of this idea in Genesis (beginning with the Flood narrative and including the Abraham-Lot story of Gen 18, the Jacob-Esau tradition in Gen 32, and the Joseph cycle in Gen 45-50) as well as trace the development of the motif through the Ellijah tradition and the prophet Amos.

It is well known that the pre-exilic prophets were generally messengers of doom toward Israel for her continual disregard of the covenant, holding out little hope that Israel might heed their message and return to her God in faithfulness. Concerning the harsh message of the prophets, Dahl (*Volk*, 30-31) writes: "JHWH *kann* das Volk vernichten, er *muß* es tun, weil das Volk durch die Sünde restlos verdorben ist....Eine Zeitlang kann er die Sünde übersehen, aber weil er Gott ist, muß er seinen Willen durchsetzen, wenn nicht mit dem Volke, so wider das Volk.... JHWH will dem Volke nicht mehr Erbarmen zeigen, Israel ist nicht mehr das Volk Gottes, und damit ist das Leben des Volkes zu Ende....JHWH hat in seiner Freiheit Israel erwählt, er kann es in seiner Freiheit auch verwerfen."

As this message of doom sinks in and as the first signs of divine judgment appear, the question of Israel's future in light of Yahweh's prior election of her takes on urgency. It is left principally to the exilic and post-exilic prophets to frame a new understanding of Israel's election which accounts for the severity of Israel's punishment and yet holds out hope for the people on the basis of Yahweh's faithfulness and the nation's renewal. The remnant concept plays a determinative role in refashioning this new understanding.

Although in Israel's theological development the remnant idea did not

arise out of her understanding of her own election,[158] it became closely con-

nected with election thought as Israel was confronted with the reality of God's

judgment and threat of rejection.[159] The remnant theme finds its significance in

its inherent bipolarity[160] -- by its very nature, it points backward to a time of

destruction or doom which the remnant has survived as well as forward to a

hopeful future for which the remnant provides the catalyst.[161]st

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[158] The earliest and most fundamental use of the remnant idea was as an assurance in the face of total destruction that a group out of the whole (whether the human race or a tribe or a family) would survive and continue. According to Hasel, 402, "Its usage in extra-Biblical and Biblical materials indicates that it arose out of man's existential concern to secure his life and existence. In the Hebrew Bible it was from the start incorporated into salvation history and became gradually employed to express future expectations of Yahwistic faith."

[159] One may see connections even in the patriarchal narratives, where the promises stemming from God's election seem to be threatened due to family rivalry (Gen 32.6-13) or natural disaster (Gen 45.5-7). However, it is primarily in the later prophets, where the possibility of God's rejection and Israel's extinction as a nation looms large that the question of Israel's election becomes acute and is answered to varying degrees by employment of the remnant motif, and the remnant theme is introduced to assure those concerned that God will remain faithful and keep for Abraham an extensive legacy of descendants.

[160] Herntrich, 198: "In content, the idea of the remnant is under double control. It contains a reference to preceding judgment or sifting. But it also denotes the limitation of this judgment. The remnant has escaped it. Hence the term implies both judgment and salvation."

[161] It is wrong to assume that the remnant concept always bears a positive, salvific sense. There are times (particularly in Amos) when the idea is used to disabuse Israel of the false hope that God will necessarily rescue a portion of the nation for the future (i.e., though a remnant will escape disaster, it will be so small and ineffective as to prove useless for the future rebuilding of the nation; cf. Amos 3.12; 4.1-3; 6.9-10), as well as to portray the future annihilation of the nations (i.e., even the remnant shall perish: Is 14.22-23,28-32; 15.9; 16.13-14; Amos 1.8; 9.1). Each of the five Hebrew roots is used to express the negative idea of complete annhihilation on the one hand as well as the positive idea of survival on the other (cf. Hasel, 387). Additionally, the theme may be used to emphasize judgment rather than salvation (i.e., only a remnant will survive -- Is 10.20-22) even though the end result demonstrates the grace of God in rescuing that remnant.

In light of this it is safest to say, along with Hasel (388) that "...each individual context, stylistic usage, sentence- and word-combination puts a certain semantic value upon the form of a Hebrew root in its particular usage. The semantic value established on the basis of these considerations is absolute and must not be blurred by superimposing another semantic value from a different context."

The existential question of life and death for the community is always a central feature, and thus the remnant motif appears so powerfully precisely at those times when an unfaithful Israel fears for her national existence and seeks solace in the fact of her original election.

Though the prophets can use the remnant idea in an historical sense,[162] they introduce and make full use of an eschatological, though not necessarily apocalyptic, orientation with regard to the remnant. Typically this involves a future divine work (at the day of the Lord) which restores purified Israel to the full glory she once had (or was intended to have) in the promised land and which either eradicates (cf. Zeph 2.9) or places into full submission to her the nations of the world (Is 2.2-4; Mi 4.1-3). The remnant becomes the seed or root or stock from which the nation of Israel will once again grow and flourish.

As with Israel's original establishment and election, so also that of the remnant is due completely to the grace of God.[163] It is generally true that the remnant has its origin not in the qualities of those saved but in the merciful determination of God[164] (sometimes the attribute of faithfulness or loyalty is emphasized as that which qualifies one by God's grace to belong to the remnant -- cf. Gen 7.1; 1 Kg 19.14,18; Is 1.27-28; 7.9; 10.20; 28.16; Amos 5.4-6).[165]

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[162] We use 'historical' here to indicate that period of time bridged by the remnant idea whose future still lies firmly within the ongoing process of the present age as conceived of by the prophet (e.g., Is 1.8-9; 6.13; 30.17). The historical remnant consists of those who survive a disaster but are not yet the sifted people of God who will become the remnant with an eschatological future.

[163] Herntrich, 200: "In the message of the remnant disaster and salvation are in fact united in such a way that the continuity of history is grounded solely in the work of God, who establishes a remnant."

[164] Ibid., 203.

[165] Herntrich's assertion that faith or holiness is not the condition for belonging to the remnant but "...simply the other side of the establishment of the remnant" (207) is true theologically, as one considers the larger picture painted by the prophets of Yahweh's sovereignty and control of history, but it is not something immediately affirmed by the prophets.

Often God promises through the prophets to preserve a remnant without any qualification as to how He will sift this smaller group out of the larger mass, or with the recognition that those comprising the remnant are no different from the judged except that they receive mercy and thus are spared for Israel's future or God's glory. Here, as in the case of God's original election of the people, divine sovereignty and freedom mark the way in which Yahweh dispenses judgment in line with His holiness and yet preserves a remnant through whom to carry out His promises to Israel and thus bring glory to His name.

5. Summary

In this limited overview of the theme of election in the Old Testament, we have first considered various background issues that have exercised scholars in this field, including methodological approaches, a discussion of the origins of Israel's self-understanding as God's elect, the question of a 'development' of the idea over Israel's history, and a clarification of the relationship between the closely connected themes of election and covenant. While the answers to these issues are important in their own right and helpful in gaining a better understanding of the scholarly issues involved in the study of election in the Old Testament, they are not central to our ultimate concern, which is to gain a general, synthetic understanding of election as portrayed in the Old Testament itself and as it would have most likely appeared to a first century Jew. We shall be drawing on this material as we consider Paul's understanding of election in Romans 9-11 later in this study.

Section 2 involved an examination of seven different images/metaphors taken from the social, military-political, pastoral and industrial contexts of Israel's life and pressed into service to describe Israel's election relationship with her God. By means of the characteristics inherent in the relationships depicted by these images, certain conclusions may be drawn about Israel's

understanding of her election. These conclusions are spelled out in section 3, where it was argued that election played three important and closely interrelated roles in Old Testament theology: Israel was chosen to belong to God, to serve Him and the nations, and to receive God's abundant blessings.

Finally, in section 4 we investigated the Old Testament relationship between election and the remnant, concluding that while the remnant idea did not originate from the wider theme of election, it very naturally became co-opted as an election term when Israel's assurance of her chosenness began to falter in the face of potential annihilation prior to the exile. Because of its inherent bipolarity of meaning, the remnant concept served admirably as a bridge between a past of doom and gloom and a future of hope and glory. Used by the later prophets particularly, and by Isaiah consummately, the remnant motif provided the appropriate linkage for an election-rejection-restoration perspective to develop, offering hope for the future and reaffirming God's faithfulness to His original promises to the patriarchs.

Chapter 3: Election in the Dead Sea Scrolls

1. Introduction: the Scope and Purpose of This Chapter

Our objective in this chapter is to provide further background material from the intertestamental period which might help to shed light on Paul's subsequent use of the concept of election in Romans 9-11. However, we are forced by space limitations to restrict our survey of this field, and so have opted to investigate the writings of the Qumran community for the following reasons: 1) election is a major theme in the Scrolls;[166] 2) the Qumran Scrolls represent the thought and practice of a Jewish sect in existence both before and during the emergence of the early Christian community; 3) both the Qumran community and the church invested much effort in seeking to define their identities in light of a growing separation from mainstream Temple Judaism; 4) of all the intertestamental literature, the Qumran documents offer the most striking initial parallels to Paul's thought on election and predestination in Romans 9-11.

Although we will not be able to deal in detail with other intertestamental works in this present study, reference will be made to various pertinent texts in the course of our analysis.

1.1. Initial Presuppositions

1.1.1. Qumran Community History

It is now generally agreed that the community of the Dead Sea Scrolls resided at Qumran somewhere between 150 BC and 68 AD.[167] The latter date

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[166] So, e.g., P. R. Davies, 54: "The covenant of this community is undoubtedly an esoteric one, in which the doctrine of election assumes a prominent rôle."

[167] Carbon-14 testing, paleographic study of the Scrolls and dating of artefacts discov-

serves as an accurate *terminus ad quem*, with site excavations indicating clearly

that the settlement was destroyed at that point by advancing Roman legions.

However, the origins of the community still lie shrouded in some mystery.

Nevertheless, some educated guesses can be made. As it is extremely unlikely

that a major Jewish sect in this time period could have gone unnoticed or

unreported by all our historical sources, one may cautiously assume that the

Qumran community must have been associated with one of the recognized

Jewish sects. Most scholars associate the Qumran brotherhood with the

Essenes[168] due to the considerable number of similarities between the two in

thought and practice,[169] though a few still argue for original ties with the Sad-

ducees, Pharisees or even the Zealots. Particularly from our awareness of the

Essene orientation toward apocalypticism as well as the Pharisaic ambivalence

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ered along with the Scrolls support this range of times. For a good summary of the evidence, cf. Fitzmyer, *Responses*, 16-20.

[168] So, e.g., Brownlee, Dupont-Sommer, Nötscher, Schubert, Cross, Mansoor, Rogers, Hengel, G. Maier, E. P. Sanders, and Vermes. Murphy-O'Connor ("The Essenes and Their History," *RB* 81 (1974), 214-44) suggests that the Qumranians were Essenes, but at the far right of a much larger Essene movement.

[169] It is widely recognized that there are certain discrepancies between the Essenes as reported by external sources and the community of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Among these may be listed 1) the fact that the Essenes sent gifts of incense to the Temple while the Qumran lead-ership enjoined a complete separation from the Jerusalem priesthood and its polluted practices, 2) the observation that priestly leadership seems considerably less prominent among the Essenes generally than at Qumran, 3) the lack of any indication that the Essenes recognize a commanding leader comparable to the Teacher of Righteousness at Qumran, 4) the discovery of the remains of women at Qumran and conflicting evidence that sectarians might have been allowed marriage in some cases over against the general Essene proscription against involvement with women, and 5) the militaristic nature of at least some Qumran literature (notably the War Scroll) versus the pacifist approach of the Essenes.

Nevertheless, as Cross (*Library*, 70) noted, "...there are few discrepancies between the accounts of the Essenes in the sources and the sectarian literature of Qumran which are not easily explained by the exterior view or the Hellenizing tendency of the classical writer." If the Essene communities were indeed as secretive about their beliefs and practices as the Dead Sea Scrolls suggest concerning the Qumranians, then it would not be surprising to find contemporary non-Essene historians or apologists (such as Pliny, Philo and even Josephus) less than com-pletely accurate concerning their material on this sect (cf. Schürer 1:583-5).

and Sadducean aversion toward the same,[170] it seems likely that Qumran, with its strongly apocalyptic character, arose as a part of the larger Essene movement.

The Essenes themselves probably stem from a wider religious movement which had its beginnings early in the Maccabean revolt.[171] Sometime in this period (200-160 BC) a Palestinian Jewish reform movement known as the Hasidim ("the pious ones") took shape. Its adherents were marked by a zealous devotion to the Law, opposition to Hellenizing influences, and a strongly apocalyptic outlook, created in part by their passion to preserve Israel's prophetic heritage and a steadfast hope for the eschatological establishment of the kingdom of God.[172] Many among the Hasidim separated themselves from the world and dwelt in the wilderness of Israel (cf. 1 Macc 2.29,31,41), both for safety and in the expectation that from the desert God would first reveal His redemption for Israel. When the Maccabees began their insurrection against Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BC, they likely received initial support from the Hasidim. However, after the success of the revolt and the subsequent reorganization of Temple Judaism under the Hasmonean dynasty, many of the Hasidim undoubtedly became disenchanted with the growing worldliness of the new non-Zadokite priesthood established along Hasmonean bloodlines. The question of the legitimacy of a Hasmonean high priest became a burning and divisive question among the Hasidim. Out of this division around 150 BC arose

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[170] As Cross (*Library*, 72 n33) emphasizes, "That which places a gulf between the Essenes and the main stream of Judaism is their apocalypticism, or more precisely, their formation of apocalyptic communities. In no case can the Pharisees, much less the Sadducees, be called apocalyptists...." Cf. further, 198.

[171] So Hengel, 1:250-1.

[172] Hengel, 1:250, argues that the origins of Jewish apocalyptic are to be found in the Hasidic movement. According to Schubert, 31, their belief in the imminence of final judgment sprang from their assessment of the dire sinfulness of the surrounding world.

the Essenes, who thereafter broke away from the Temple hierarchy, branding it illegitimate.[173] This separatist disposition, combined with a strong apocalyptic outlook, led the Essenes to develop their own distinctive theological and communal understanding of Judaism. The community at Qumran provides a telling example of this.

1.1.2. Methodological Issues

We shall be concerned primarily with the four major Scrolls (1QS, 1QH, 1QM, CD) where election proves a prominent theme, but references will be made also to other Qumran texts where pertinent. Over the last three decades in particular, scholars have become increasingly conscious of the fact that these texts are by and large composite documents.[174] One must therefore generally be wary of seeking to uncover "synthetic" themes in the Qumran material by the naive, patchwork approach of "cutting and pasting" relevant texts from different documents, or even in some cases from the same document, in an effort to come up with *the* Qumran view which may be understood in a systematic way.[175]

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[173] Cf. B. Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament*, 14-15. There are still some scholars, however, who hold that the Essene roots reach back to Babylon. Even so, they generally "...postulate a return to Palestine in the Maccabean period and at this point rejoin the partisans to the Hasidim theory in recognizing that the group which eventually settled at Qumran was once part of a wider movement" (Murphy-O'Connor, *Desert* 142).

[174] Concerning 1QS, cf. Leaney, Murphy-O'Connor (1969), Osten-Sacken, Pouilly; on 1QH, cf. Holm-Nielsen, Morawe, G. Jeremias; on 1QM, cf. P. R. Davies (1977b); on CD, cf. Murphy-O'Connor (1970,1971,1972), P. R. Davies (1983). Regarding authorship and redaction of the Scrolls generally, cf. Charlesworth (1980).

[175] Murphy-O'Connor ("Qumran and the New Testament," in *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters* [Scholars Press: 1989], 63), in exposing past methodological errors in Qumran study, writes that many scholarly works have been flawed by "...treating the Scrolls as a homogeneous body of literature, devoid of any internal tensions and showing no trace of development. Phrases from documents differing in date and intention are strung together in a way highly reminiscent of precritical theologies of the NT which conflated Pauline and Johannine texts without any respect for their divergent points of view."

While this is an apt criticism in general, its sharpness is blunted by a number of factors: 1) the radically conservative nature of the community was such that one would expect the writings of the community, even over a period of time, to be consistent and relatively uniform; 2)

Nevertheless, with regard to a theme as salient and fundamental to the Qumran community as that of election, there is justification in assuming a high level of consensus in meaning throughout the Scrolls, for the significance and purpose of their election was so central to the formation as well as the ongoing life and thought of the community as to become highly standardized from the earliest stages. Still, this having been said, we will seek to consider carefully texts within their own immediate contexts.

2. Vocabulary and Imagery of Election in the Dead Sea Scrolls

The best study to date of the vocabulary of election in the Dead Sea Scrolls is Robert Grant Rogers' 1969 Ph.D. thesis, *The Doctrine of Election in the Chronicler's work and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Methodologically, Rogers'

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the strongly hierarchical structure of the community with the communal understanding of revelation being passed down from the leadership would tend to quash a wide diversity of viewpoints concerning essential matters; 3) rival views would probably not have been tolerated very long in such a community, and certainly not committed to parchment for keeping in the Qumran library; 4) the self-imposed isolation of the community would have insulated it from an influx of new or foreign ideas; 5) while the New Testament documents come from/through a wide variety of communities facing diverse circumstances, the Qumran Scrolls come (by and large) from one very insular community whose circumstances do not change substantially throughout its existence.

Further, as Martin Hengel notes (1:218), the central Qumran writings were directed to the members of the community themselves, not to outsiders. As such, they "...express in part systematic theological statements in extremely concentrated form." Recognizing the very real possibility of tradition development, he nevertheless concludes (2:148 [n739]): "Even if we are dealing here with texts which display a certain 'history of tradition', we can still regard them as typical of basic Essene teaching of the early period. The strict discipline and closed nature of the community makes the juxtaposition of deliberately contradictory 'theologies' very improbable."

Though LaSor (75) is strictly correct that Qumran never put forward a systematic theology *per se*, this does not necessarily imply that the community had no systematic world-view, nor that with regard to important theological themes the Covenanters were inconsistent in their thinking. To the contrary, in light of the advanced nature and sometimes highly abstract conceptualization of the theological argumentation in the central Scrolls, it seems likely that the Qumranians were much more consistent in their thinking than some modern scholars give them credit for. Hence, we agree with Maier, 165, "...daß sich in der Qumranliteratur eine einheitliche Theologie widerspiegelt, die durch die Traditionsgeschichte der einzelnen Texte jeweils nur unwesentlich modifiziert wurde" (cf. also Licht, "Doctrine," 1ff.; Wernberg-Møller, 415f.; Hengel, 2:143 [n697]).

approach is semantically rather than conceptually based, and so he deals only with words that link directly to the concept of election, leaving aside any consideration of wider imagery bearing on this theme. While this somewhat limits the effectiveness of his Old Testament research,[176] it proves little hindrance to his investigations of the Qumran literature, for by the intertestamental period the language of election had become much more abstract and technical than in Israel's earlier history and thought, and the use of particular images to represent the divine election of Israel had receded into the background.[177] We will be relying on Roger's work particularly for statistical data concerning word frequency of the various election terms used in the Scrolls.[178]

2.1. Election Vocabulary

2.1.1 Statistical Data

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, there are over one thousand occurrences of potential election words.[179] Of these, 313 are verbal and 695 nominal. From that group over half[180] the occurrences bear actual significance for the theme of election. The distribution pattern of these terms throughout the Scrolls highlights the centrality of the election theme in the major works:

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[176] Cf. 21-24 above.

[177] For an overview of these Old Testament images, cf. 32-48 above.

[178] Rogers' study draws upon the following Scrolls: 1QpHab, 1QS, 1QM, 1QH, CD, 4QDibHam, 1QSa, 1QSb, 1Q22, 1Q34, 4QpIsa, 4QpNah, 4QpPs37, 4QPB and 4QFl.

[179] Rogers, 167, sets the figure at 1008. This number reflects all the occurrences in the aforementioned Scrolls (cf. n.12 above) of the following 11 verbs and 17 nouns:

verbs: אהב, בדל, בחר, ברר, גאל, חזק, ידע, לקח, פרה, קנה and קרא;

nouns: שאר, קהל, קדוש, פליכה, עם, עדה, עד, עבד, סוד, סגלה, נחלה, ישראל, יחד, גוי, בחיר, and שארית אביון.

[180] Rogers, 167, puts the relevant total at 572 (89 verbal and 483 nominal occurrences), or 56.7 per cent of the potential vocabulary total. He includes in the relevant nominal total all references to those specifically categorized as non-elect as well, so that of the 483 nominal references bearing on election, 375 refer to the elect group and 108 to the non-elect.

Scroll	Verbal	Nominal
1QS[181]	25	88
1QH	26	69[182]
1QM	8	83
CD	16	87[183]
4QDibHam	6	21
1QpHab	2	17
Others	6	118

2.1.2. Election Verbs in the Dead Sea Scrolls

2.1.2.1. אהב -- the Scrolls do not often speak of God electing Israel through His love, although the implication is never very distant. The only explicit references are found in CD (8.16-18 [ms.A]; 19.30-31 [ms.B]) and 4QDibHam (2.9; 4.4-5). The CD text comprises a commentary on two key election passages from Dt (7.8a and 9.5a), and highlights the fact that God's sovereign love for the fathers is passed on to "the converts of Israel who depart from the way of the people," to those who belong to the Covenant of the fathers. In the context of CD it is clear that שבי ישראל refers to the sectarians, who have turned aside from the iniquity of larger Israel and committed themselves with all diligence to the New Covenant. Thus, here a standard Old Testament election passage is reinterpreted to indicate that the divine election no longer applies to ethnic Israel as a whole, but only to those individuals who have separated themselves from her iniquity and joined the true community.[184] In 4QDibHam 2.9,

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[181] These figures for the Community Rule are somewhat skewed by the inflated use of two terms. The verb בדל is employed 15 times in 1QS (and just 3 times in the rest of the Scrolls), while the noun יחד occurs 57 times (with 24 appearances elsewhere in the Scrolls).

[182] The Hymns of Thanksgiving are distinguished by their predilection for the noun עבד and non-use of the usually ubiquitous ישראל. Of the 22 total relevant occurrences of עבד in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 21 are found in 1QH (the other is in 1QS).

[183] While 1QH makes no use of the term ישראל, the Damascus Document raises it to its highest prominence in any of the Scrolls (it is CD's favorite election term, occurring 42 times).

[184] Rogers, 173, notes: "The elect group is not just an ethnic unit, but it is a group of individuals who have made a specific commitment to follow a prescribed way of life; this com-

Yahweh's love is adduced as one reason (along with His covenantal promise)

why He did not destroy the fathers in His wrath when they rebelled. Appeal is

then made to the same love and mercy on behalf of contemporary Israel. If

such an interpretation is correct, then this scroll proves an exception to the gen-

eral tenor of Qumran thought (as we shall see below), for here and in 4.4-5[185]

ethnic Israel seems to be the focus of God's electing love.[186]

אהב is used in 1QH and 1QS to indicate a certain quality of life which

sets individuals apart as members of the elect community. The sectarians are to

"love all that He has chosen and hate all that He has rejected" (1QS 1.3). Even

more specifically (1.9), they are to love all the sons of light (according to their

place in God's design) and hate all the sons of darkness (according to their guilt

in the vengeance of God). This attitude reflects God's own disposition, for it is

He who created the spirits of Light and Darkness and through them established

all human activity (3.26). God loves the spirit of Light and delights in its works

forever; conversely, He hates the counsel of Darkness and its fruit (4.1). In

1QH 14.8-10, the servant of God is given understanding to be able to love all

that [whom?] God loves and hate those things [people?] which God hates.[187] In

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mitment distinguishes the elect from the non-elect and even Israelite from Israelite."

[185] "For Thou hast loved Israel above all the peoples. Thou hast chosen the tribe of
Judah and hast established Thy Covenant with David that he might be as a princely shepherd
over Thy people and sit before Thee on the throne of Israel forever. All the nations have seen
Thy glory; Thou who hast sanctified Thyself in the midst of Thy people Israel."

[186] The generally accepted view that 4QDibHam stems from a tradition predating Qum-
ran (cf. Lichtenberger, 93 n1 for a concise summary) would account for this anomaly.

[187] Though there are significant lacunae in these lines, nevertheless their import is
clear. The fact that lines 11ff. speak of human beings as belonging to either good or evil
according to their lot would support the interpretation of כול in line 10 as a reference to people
rather than things or precepts. This would then offer a strong statement that God has separated
humanity into those He loves (and therefore chooses) and those He hates (and therefore rejects).
However, final certainty is not possible here due to the poor state of the scroll.

16.13 and 17.24, the elect are characterized as those who love and obey God's

commands, who walk in all the ways that please God and disdain everything

which He loathes.[188]

2.1.2.2. בדל -- used particularly in the hiphil, this verb carries election con-

notations. With God as subject, it can indicate either the setting apart of His

elect from the *massa damnata* (1QS 7.4; 1Q34 3 2.6), or the separating for

destruction those who have no part in the Qumran covenant (1QS 2.16; 5.18;

1QH 7.12). When the Covenanters are the subject, בדל indicates that they are

to separate themselves from the 'men of falsehood' (1QS 5.1,10; cf. 9.9,20) or

the sons of the Pit (1QH 6.14), or to 'set apart as holy' those who have success-

fully completed their two year training period (1QS 8.11).[189] This principle of

separation becomes a means of identifying the elect from the non-elect.

According to 1QS 8.13, the call to separation from the 'habitation of the

ungodly' provides a prominent reason for the Qumran withdrawal into the

wilderness where, in purity of lifestyle they are able to fulfill the command to

"prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord."[190]

1Q34 and CD 7.3-4 are particularly instructive for our purposes. In the

former, בחר and הבדל are intimately linked as divine activities which establish

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[188] It is interesting in this connection that CD refers in 3.2-3 to Abraham, Isaac and
Jacob as individuals who did not walk in the stubbornness of their own heart (cf. 2.17-18) but
kept the commandments of God instead. Accordingly, they are accounted "friends of God"
(אוהבים לְאֵל).

[189] In a non-election sense, בדל is also used 1) with the community (or leaders of the
community) as subject to indicate the penalty of temporary exclusion from the community or
from the sacred meal for a prescribed period of time (1QS 6.25; 7.1,2,5,16; 8.24; CD 9.21,23);
2) of the work of the Master in distinguishing among members 'according to their spirit' for
determination of their position within the community hierarchy (1QS 9.14); and 3) in a
ritual/ethical sense of the need to distinguish between what is clean and unclean (CD 5.17;
12.19), a responsibility which the Temple priests signally failed to carry out (CD 5.7).

[190] 1QS 8.14 actually quotes Isa 40.3, and indicates that the community saw itself as
the true Israel living in conformity with the Law and the prophets.

the Qumran community, indicate its continuity with the Israel of the past, and set it apart from among all the peoples. The context as well as the probable purpose of this scroll[191] suggest that the sectarians saw themselves not only in continuity with Old Testament Israel but as the true Israel bearing Yahweh's election in the present day. The latter passage links God's prior setting apart of the community for holiness with the subsequent obligation laid upon the sectarians to keep apart from everything unholy. It is not too bold to say that Qumran zealously pursued its detachment from the world and its ritual/ethical purity laws as a direct result of its firm belief in Yahweh's divine election. For Qumran, the elect are those who subscribe to a certain kind of lifestyle under a new covenant which is made known only to those who leave their former way of life and join the community.

2.1.2.3. בחר -- As the concept of election became more refined within the theology of Israel, the verb בחר assumed an increasingly central role in election vocabulary. The language of the Qumran community reflects the culmination of this development. While בחר is still used to indicate human choice for the way of Yahweh[192] or (by contrast) for the way of one's own stubborn heart,[193] it typically serves as the key verb highlighting God's activity in choosing[194] the

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[191] Vermes (*DSS*, 231) judges that this liturgical prayer probably belonged to the sect's Pentecostal ritual celebration.

[192] Cf. 1QS 9.17; 10.12; 1QH 9.10; 16.10; CD 2.15; 3.2; 1QSb 3.25.

[193] Cf. 1QH 15.19; CD 1.18-19; 3.11; 8.8.

[194] In 1QS 1.3-4 (cf. also 1QH 4.4; 1QSb 3.25), בחר acts as a synonym for אהב. Declaring that the saints are to love everything which God has chosen and to hate everything which God has rejected, this verse parallels the idea expressed in 1QH 14.9-10 that the servant of God is to bless [...and choose] that which God loves and loathe that which He [hates]. Thus, that which God loves is identical to that which He has chosen in His positive, electing purpose. This refers both to the Law (the path which God has chosen) as well as to those who belong to the community.

sectarians to belong to Him from the midst of all other peoples (including

unbelieving Israelites).[195] By linking so closely the paired contrasts of 'lov-

ing/hating' and 'choosing/rejecting' with reference to God's activity toward the

human race, Qumran thought emphasizes the double-sidedness of divine election

which was for the most part implicit in Old Testament election thought. For

Qumran, God not only chooses those to whom He will show mercy; He also

chooses those He will destroy.[196] CD 2.7 underscores that the wrath of God[197]

is alloted for those who have departed from the way and hate the rule -- they

will have no remnant or survivors. The reason given for the errantry of the

wicked is that "from the beginning God **chose** them not" (כִּי לֹא בָחַר אֵל בָּהֶם

מִקֶּדֶם עוֹלָם). Yahweh's determination of this group to judgment is further

emphasized in 2.13 with the words, "Those whom He hated He led astray."[198]

Yet the general election usage of this verb in the Dead Sea Scrolls

focuses primarily on the positive activity of God in choosing the sectarians as

His people. Toward the end of the strongly doctrinaire material known as the

'Instruction on the Two Spirits' (1QS 3.13-4.26), we read concerning the

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[195] P. R. Davies notes (152-3) that at least in the Damascus Document apostate Jews
comprise not just those who actively dissociate themselves from the Qumran community, but
also those who passively or actively associate themselves with the damned, i.e., the society out-
side the community.

[196] For a fuller treatment of this theme, cf. 10?-11? below on the relationship between
election and predestination in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

[197] According to CD 2.6, "power, might and great flaming wrath by the hand of all the
angels of destruction" is directed toward those who refuse to submit themselves to the truth
proclaimed at Qumran.

[198] It is clear here that the group in question includes those Israelites who have actively
contested or ignored the teaching of the Qumran community. Not as clear, but still likely in
light of the sectarian belief in the sovereignty of God over all the affairs of human beings, is the
probability that this rejected group contains *all* Israelites who do not in the end embrace the
community and become sectarians. Gentiles are not mentioned here for the simple reason that
the sectarians could not envision non-Israelites ever belonging to the true people of God.

'perfect of the way' (i.e., the sectary members) that "God has chosen them for

an everlasting covenant, and all the glory of Adam shall be theirs" (4.22). This

teaching is reinforced in 11.6f., where wisdom, knowledge,[199] righteousness,

power and glory are listed as unremitting gifts which God has granted to those

whom He has chosen, 'causing them to inherit the lot of the Holy Ones.' Three

passages in the Hodayot also underline the divine election of the Qumranians.

The second half[200] of 15.23 reads, "I know that Thou hast chosen them before

all others and that they will serve Thee forever." This most naturally refers to

the sectarians, as contrasted with the wicked who will be destroyed (cf. 15.17-

20,24-5). According to 16.13, God has chosen a place of lovingkindness for

those who love and obey him, i.e., the Covenanters. And in 17.21 we learn

that God prepares the road ahead for those whom He has chosen, thereby ena-

bling them to refrain from sin and avoid judgment. In the opening section of

the scroll of Blessings[201] (1QSb 1.2), the Master is to pronounce blessing on

those whom God has chosen for an eternal covenant -- this group is defined as

those who fear God, keep His commandments, hold fast to His holy covenant

and walk perfectly in all His ways. In Qumran theology, this could only

include community members in good standing.

The two relevant occurrences of בחר in 1QM[202] and 1Q34 respectively

are a bit more ambiguous as to the constituency of the elect. The rhetorical

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[199] These verses reflect the characteristic Qumran viewpoint that special revelation of saving knowledge is given only to the elect.

[200] The first half of the verse must be reconstructed with some creativity due to large lacunae: קוֹדְשֶׁךָ   וָאִיןָ בַּאֲמִתְּךָ הוֹן כּוֹל יִשְׁוֶה לֹא. Vermes offers a reasonable hypothesis: "I know that no riches equal Thy truth, and [have therefore desired to enter the Council of] Thy holiness." Thus, בָּם in the second half of the verse would refer to those who belong to the Council, i.e., all those who are full members of the sect. The fact that 15.17-20 refers to the wicked being set apart for wrath and is then followed by a change of theme which seems to pre-sent a contrast would lend support to Vermes' proposal.

[201] 1QSb also contains two examples of בחר indicating divine activity in a non-soteriological sphere. Both 3.23 and 4.22 refer to God's choice and appointment of the sons of Zadok to priestly functions.

question of 1QM 10.9, "Who is like Thy people Israel which Thou hast chosen

for Thyself[203] from all the peoples of the lands...?", would seem to comprehend

the people of God ethnically, a sense strengthened by the invocation 'God of

Israel' in the previous verse. However, the following text further defines Israel

as the עַם קְדוֹשֵׁי בְרִית who are instructed in the laws and ways of wisdom --

characteristics not normally ascribed by Qumran to anyone outside the New

Covenant, including other Jews. 1Q34 3 2.5 shares this ambiguity, for it is

possible that God's past election of the people 'in the time of His goodwill' and

their being set apart from all the nations as a holy possession could refer to the

original divine election of Israel in the Exodus event and its continuity in the

ethnic people. However, in light of the subsequent reference to God's renewing

of the covenant for this people and the raising up of a faithful shepherd, it is

much more likely that the community of the New Covenant under the Teacher

of Righteousness (i.e., the sectarians) is intended.[204]

2.1.2.4. ידע -- with regard to its characteristic election sense as found in the

Old Testament,[205] this verb is used only once[206] in the Dead Sea Scrolls to indi-

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[202] The only other occurrence of בחר in 1QM (2.7) has no election significance,
indicating as it does the responsibility of the men of renown in the community to choose soldiers
from among the eligible men to fight in the eschatological war.

[203] Lichtenberger, 185, notes that the reference to election here serves as a guarantee to
the faithful men of war that God will help them in battle.

[204] If Vermes is right that the text of 1Q34 reflects a part of the sect's Pentecostal
liturgy, it may be that the passage in question was understood to point to the initial election of
Israel in conjunction with the Mosaic covenant and the reconfirmation and continuation of that
election among those who live under the New Covenant at Qumran.

[205] So, for example, Gen 18.19; Hos 13.5; Amos 3.2; cf. Ex 33.12; Is 43.1; 45.3-4;
49.1. As B. W. Anderson, 311, notes, in the Bible knowledge comes primarily in the context
of personal relationship. He concludes that "...God's knowing, being the expression of his per-
sonal will, is also an act of election...."

[206] *Pace* Rogers (177), who declares that it is never used this way in the Scrolls.

cate God's choosing to enter into a relationship with certain human beings.

Even so, this occurrence in 1QH 9.30 bears an individualistic emphasis not

found in the Old Testament texts.[207]

Much more often, ידע and its cognates דעת and דעה are used at Qumran

in two senses novel to their Old Testament functions. First, they may indicate

the knowledge that God possesses which circumscribes all that exists and hap-

pens from the beginning of creation to its final consummation[208] -- God is אל

הדעות[209] (1QS 3.15ff.;[210] 1QH 1.16ff.;[211] 12.10). This divine knowledge is

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[207] It might be argued that this hymn belongs to the autobiographical psalms of the
Teacher of Righteousness rather than to the individualized, personal hymns meant to be
appropriated by the community members themselves when recited or sung in worship.
However, after refinements of research in this area over the last thirty years, present scholarship
is fairly agreed that they hymns found in 1QH 2.1-19; 4.5-29; 5.5-6.36; 7.6-25; and 8.4-40
should be ascribed to the Teacher of Righteousness, and the rest viewed as hymns of the com-
munity (cf. Murphy-O'Connor (1986:131). Nevertheless, even if the hymn in question should
in the end prove to be part of the Teacher's autobiographical material, the general tenor of this
affirmation -- "Thou hast known me from the time of my father, [and hast chosen me] from the
womb" -- as well as what follows is certainly something which each sectarian could and would
personally acknowledge in gratefulness to God for leading him into the New Covenant.

[208] This idea of deterministic foreknowledge is also seen in Ass. Mos. 12.4: "God has
created all the nations which are in the world (just as he created) us [i.e., Israel]. And he has
foreseen both them and us from the beginning of the creation of the world even to the end of the
age. Indeed, nothing, to the least thing, has been overlooked by Him. But, (rather), he has
seen all things and he is the cause of all" (translation by J. Priest, in *The Old Testament
Pseudepigrapha*, Charlesworth <ed.>, vol. 1). Priest notes that although the final clause is
conjectural due to illegibility of the manuscript, nevertheless "The sense is clear; God is in con-
trol from beginning to end" (934 n12a). This verse forms one of many deterministic passages in
the Assumption of Moses which share a close rapport with Qumran thought and lead Priest to
conclude that "The Testament of Moses does appear to have closer affinities with the Essenes
than with any other *known* group in the Judaism of the period" (921).

[209] This phrase is indeed found in 1 Sam 2.3 and the theme of the divine knowledge
surfaces in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament (Job 10.7; Ps 139.6; Pr 3.20), but none
of these instances presents the knowledge of God as determinative of the destiny of the whole
created order. As Maier, 228, elegantly affirms: "Die Bezeichnung 'Gott der Erkenntnis' gibt
den Boden an, dem solche Prädestinationslehre [i.e., as found in 1QS 3.15ff.] entsproßte: es ist
der Boden weisheitlicher Tradition. Die genannte Bezeichnung reißt wieder die Kluft, die
unüberwindliche Diastase zwischen dem weisen und überlegenen Schöpfergott und dem blinden,
bloß geschaffenen Menschen auf."

[210] In this context, מאל הדעות כול הייה ונהייה may be translated either as "from the
God of knowledge (comes) all that is and shall be," or "from God (comes) knowledge of all that
is and shall be." In either case, it is affirmed directly or indirectly that God's knowledge over-
sees all that has happened or will happen. In its context at the beginning of the Instruction on
the Two Spirits, the import of this teaching is not simply that God knows all things but that He

closely associated with His predestination[212] of all things to their ultimate

destiny,[213] and serves to unravel the mystery of why one person is righteous

while another is wicked by declaring that God has preordained both to be as

they are.[214] Thus, the knowledge of God involves the activity of election, for

God creates and ordains human beings (as well as all other things) to their

respective destinies (either to be sons of light or sons of darkness) according to

His predetermined plan. Because God's knowledge is so comprehensive and

His determinations ordered completely according to His secret counsel, the

Essenes often used the term 'mystery' when speaking of God's plan and pur-

pose.[215] The term, רז,[216] highlights the sectarian belief that this divine knowl-

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has determined all things according to His all-knowing plan. Licht ("Analysis," 91) correctly
comments that this sentence "provides a firm theological basis" for the Two Spirits doctrine and
contains within itself "the principle of predestination."

[211] In speaking generically of humankind, 1QH 1.19-20 declares, "In the wisdom of
Thy knowledge Thou didst establish their destiny before ever they were" (ובחכמת דעתכה
הכ]י[נותה תעו]ו[דתם בטרם היותם).

[212] For the arguments by some that Qumran sought to leave scope for the freedom of
the human will under the overarching knowledge of God, cf. 10🌑-11🌑 below.

[213] G. Maier (227) writes concerning 1QS 3.15: "Mann kann diese Aussage schwerlich
überschätzen. In ihr haben wir den Fundamentalsatz der Unterweisung vor uns. Dieser führt
alles, was ist und geschieht, auf die göttliche Prädestination zurück."

[214] 1QS 4.26 forthrightly declares that God Himself has alloted the particular portions
of the Spirits of Light and Darkness which each human being has and according to which each in
the end will be judged. As a result of this, the fate (both present and future) of the individual is
unchangeably determined.

[215] According to Merrill, 20, the mysteries are generally tied to eschatological events,
all of which are predetermined. He concludes: "Indeed, everything in the universe is caught up
in the mysterious working of God who has made all things to operate for His glory (1QH
13.13). Mystery, then, is the knowledge of the predestined plan of God for the ages, a knowl-
edge accessible only to God and to those to whom He chooses to reveal Himself (1QH 1.21;
2.13; 10.2-5; 11.10; 1QS 9.18; 11.5). The fact that they are secret argues in favor of their
having been planned and determined by God."
        1QpHab 7.13-14 clearly demonstrates this understanding: "For all the ages of God
reach their appointed end as He determines for them in the mysteries of His wisdom" (כיא כול
קיצי אל יבואו לתכונם כאשר חקק לה]ם[ברזי ערמתו).

[216] Licht ("Doctrine," 8) defines רז as a "divine, unfathomable, unalterable decision."

edge, while crucial for salvation, is beyond mortal comprehension by means of

the natural channels of learning or investigation; indeed, it is not even knowable

through the unaided study of the Torah.[217] But by means of special revelation,

God makes this knowledge accessible to the elect, either through the divinely

appointed Teacher of Righteousness[218] or through direct inspiration. Here,

then, we find the second major use of ידע and its cognates in the Scrolls.

Knowledge becomes defined as a true understanding of the mysteries of God

which is imparted as a divine gift to the chosen. For the Essenes, this true

knowledge belongs to the soteriological sphere (cf. 1QS 2.1-4; 11.3f.).[219]

Revealed only to the elect,[220] it explains how and why God has selected them

from the midst of all humanity,[221] including wayward Israel.[222]

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[217] So Maier, 204: "Nach der Anschauung Qumrans ist der Mensch, wenigstens im entscheidenden Bereich, dem soteriologischen, von der Erkenntnis ausgeschlossen. Um Gott legt sich eine Sphäre der Geheimnisse und die Tora ist ohne seine besondere Anleitung nicht zu verstehen, auch sein Tun ist im Geheimnis verschlossen." Cf. also Mansoor, 108; Schubert, 67; Hengel, 1:222. This is the rationale behind the pesher mode of exegesis so prominent at Qumran.

Maier's conclusions are solidly based on his investigation of Qumran anthropology (168-205). His summation on 182-3 explains why for Qumran human beings are completely dependent on God for salvific knowledge: "Qumran betrachtet den Menschen positiv, insoweit es im Anschluß an den Genesisbericht in ihm den Herrscher über die andern irdischen Geschöpfe sieht. In den Verdergrund schiebt sich aber eine negative Betrachtungsweise: Man schweigt von der imago dei und streicht die Vergänglichkeit, natürliche Blindheit und Sündhaftigkeit des Menschen, seine Schwäche und sein unreines Entstehen heraus. Weil der Mensch absolut dem Schöpfergott gegenübergestellt wird, herrscht eine statische Betrachtung vor. Der weisheitliche Pessimismus bezüglich des Menschen ist in Qumran noch wesentlich verstärkt und in der vollkommenen Abhängigkeit von Gott zeichnet sich schon deutlich eine prädestinatianische Tendenz ab." Cf. also Mansoor, 102.

[218] According to 1QpHab 7.4f., God has made known to the Teacher of Righteousness all the mysteries of His servants the prophets."

[219] Cf. Hengel, 1:222; Maier, 204.

[220] This is seen most clearly in the introduction to the Teaching on the Two Spirits, where revelation of this body of truth is given to all the sons of light, and by implication hidden from all the sons of darkness (cf. 1QS 8.11-12; 9.17-18; 1QH 1.21, which speak straightforwardly of concealment of the truth from outsiders).

[221] Hengel, 1:223, explains that for the sectarians, divine revelation "...gives man knowledge of his absolute nothingness and complete sinfulness..., leads him to repentance and thus makes him willing to separate himself now, at the end of time, from the *massa perditionis* of apostate Israel and the nations of the world, and enter the holy remnant of the community of

Since therefore

> ...knowledge in this sense means for the members of the
> Qumran community a fact of salvation, inasmuch as
> nobody outside the group can share it. Only the ones
> whom God has illumined for His covenant are capable of
> such knowledge,"[223]

it naturally became understood as a means and sign of election.[224]

2.1.2.5. קרא -- this verb is used with its classic election meaning only

sparingly in the Dead Sea Scrolls. 4QDibHam contains three of the seven rele-

vant occurrences, in forms most reminiscent of Old Testament usage.[225] In

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the 'children of light' which incorporates the people of God."

    Sanders, 267, views this helpfully from a sociological slant: "Defining the sectarian
covenant as the only covenant and themselves as the only elect was for the sectarians a very
serious step, one which makes them members of a 'sect' as distinct from the Jerusalem parties.
Having taken this step, they needed to explain God's choice of them and also why the other
Israelites refused to see and believe. This was such a serious matter that only God, whose work-
ings are a mystery, could be the author of it."

[222] 1QS 8.11-12 makes clear that the divine revelation given to the Teacher and the
community has been hidden not just from the Gentiles but from larger Israel.

    Rogers, 178, concludes from his study of ידע in the Scrolls that "All the pertinent
references containing ידע define the elect group in a narrow, exclusive manner; the elect is com-
posed only of those who have access to the special knowledge God has revealed to the Teacher
of Righteousness."

[223] Schubert, 68-9.

[224] Or tantamount to election itself (cf. 1QH 12.34f.; also 2.20; 7.26,34; 14.12).
Sanders, 260, concludes concerning the theme of knowledge in 1QH: "Thus, knowledge can be
the means of effecting the election (one knows which path to choose); it can be more or less
equated with election (one gives thanks for knowledge as for redemption and election); and it
accompanies election (being elect, one knows)."

[225] In speaking of God's original election of Israel, this prayer essentially equates קרא
with בחר. 2.12 states, "We were called by Thy name;" 2.15 recalls that "despite our offences
Thou didst call us;" and 3.5 contrasts the nations which are as nothing before God with His
chosen people: "For Thou hast named Israel 'My son, my firstborn....'"

    This close parallel with Old Testament usage should not surprise us, especially since the
scroll in question is generally thought to pre-date the Qumran community (cf. n185 above).

1QM, the verbal nominative form is used twice to define the sectarians as "the called of God" (קרואי אל). This is the epithet to be written on the trumpets calling the congregation to battle (3.2), as well as on one of the eight standards when they set out for battle (4.10).[226] The Damascus Document, however, contains the most unique usage of a derivative of קרא and by it reflects the distinctive understanding of election found among the Essenes. CD 2.11 occurs in the context of a contrast drawn between apostate Israel (2.4-10) and the community of believers (2.11-12). It declares that in the midst of God's wrath and judgment He raised up for Himself men *called by name* (קריאי שם), so as to leave a remnant to the land. That this act of calling is to be understood in an individualized rather than corporate sense[227] is confirmed by 4.4-5, where those 'called by name' are defined as the sons of Zadok, who are the elect of Israel and who will stand at the end of days. 4.5 goes on to speak of the exact list of names of those who have been called by name and are thus elect.[228]

2.1.2.6. קנה, לקח, גאל, ברר -- these verbs, while bearing election meaning to various degrees in the Old Testament (particularly לקח), are not used in the context of election throughout the Scrolls.

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[226] 1QM 4.9-11 is a particular help in grasping this document's understanding of the Covenanters' identity. The eight titles describing the community all demonstrate her relationship to God, and it is arguable that all (including the title 'the called of God') are designations with military overtones.

Rogers' citation of 1QM 14.4-5 to describe the elect as members of God's covenant whom He has redeemed and *called* to a glorious fate is open to question due to a lacuna in line 5, but reasonable in light of the contrast drawn there with the ultimate destruction of the nations.

[227] I.e., either those called by the name 'Israel', 'sons of Zadok', or by the name of God (= belonging to God).

[228] According to Flusser ("Dead Sea," 222), ... קריאי in these contexts parallels the New Testament usage of κλητοί and κεκλημένοι.

2.1.3. Election Nouns in the Dead Sea Scrolls

2.1.3.1. אביון -- the Covenanters apparently used this term as a peculiar self-designation. It is not found in the Old Testament,[229] but becomes an honorific title at Qumran for the elect.[230] Presumably, 'the poor ones' refers first of all to the fact that the sectarians renounced personal ownership in favor of simple communal living. By moving out to the wilderness to study and prepare for the coming of the end, they demonstrated an indifference toward financial or material gain. Secondly, there is perhaps an implication of spiritual poverty, i.e., a recognition by community members of their complete dependency upon God for their election and salvation, and thus an identification with those whom God favors.[231] In the Dead Sea Scrolls, אביון refers exclusively to the sectarians as the elect group, and defines them over against the wicked (who constitute all those Jews[232] opposed to the teachings of the sect).[233]

2.1.3.2. בחיר -- as with בחר, the cognate בחיר is central to the thought of election in the Dead Sea Scrolls and is used exclusively with reference to the mem-

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[229] In intertestamental literature, the term is found in the Psalms of Solomon (5.2; 15.2) as a description of the righteous or pious.

[230] The double occurrence in 4QpPs37 of עדת האביונים (2.10; 3.10) in parallel with עדת בחירי (2.5; 3.5) clearly demonstrates this identification.

[231] For more on this, cf. S. Légasse, "Les Pauvres en Esprit et les 'Volontaires' de Qumran," *NTS* 8 (1962), 336-45. For the general historical development of the phrase 'the poor' to describe those rightly related to God, cf. A. Gélin (*Les Pauvres de Yahvé* [(Témoins de Dieu 14), Paris 1953]), who argues for Zeph 3.11-13; 2.3 as the springboard for the later identification of the true people of God with the 'poor'.

[232] It is taken for granted that the Gentiles belong among the wicked who will be destroyed.

[233] Cf. 1QH 2.32; 3.25; 5.16,18,22; 1QM 11.9,13; 13.14; 1QpHab 12.2-6,10; 4Q171 2.10.

bers of the sect.[234] The community's election is seen to stem from the gracious

good pleasure of God.[235]   Additionally, it seems to have both corporate and

individualistic aspects.[236] The elect are those whom God has caused to recog-

nize and submit to truth, particularly as it is revealed through the Teacher of

Righteousness,[237] and who choose to enter the community of the new covenant.

According to 1QpHab 5.4, the elect community will serve as the instrument of

God's final judgment against the nations and apostate Israel.[238] Until that time,

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[234] In CD 4.3, it is the sons of Zadok who comprise the body of the elect. According
to Davies (following Dupont-Sommer and others; *pace* Nötscher, 175), the title 'sons of Zadok'
represents the present, eschatological members of the community (92). On page 95, he con-
cludes: "They represent, I think, those who presently constitute the community, who join it at
the 'end of days.' It also includes, potentially, those who are being addressed." This latter
sentence stems from Davies' belief, revising Murphy-O'Connor's work ("An Essene Missionary
Document? CD II,14-VI,1," *RB* 77 (1971), 201-29), that 4.3 falls within a section addressing
itself in a missionary way to larger Israel.

[235] In 1QS 8.6, the council of the Community is designated 'the elect of goodwill'
(בחירי רצון). רצון here most likely refers to the divine good pleasure which is at the heart of
God's choosing those whom He desires to belong to Him. This view is reinforced by the state-
ment of 11.16 that God establishes the righteousness of the elect of mankind 'as it pleases Him
to do' (כאשר רציתה לבחירי אדם).
    Cf. also n126 above concerning the use in the Old Testament of בחיר rather than בחור
to indicate the sovereign activity of God in choosing independently of any positive qualities in
the object considered.

[236] Typically, the 'elect' is understood as a collective noun, in common with the Old
Testament. Hence, the community is sometimes referred to as 'the congregation of His elect'
(עדת בחירי) in 4QpPs 37 2.5; 3;5; and 4QpIsa-d 1.3. However, this corporate aspect owes its
vitality not to an overarching ethnic bond, but rather to the determining will of God. The Qum-
ran community confesses itself as those who, from a heavenly standpoint, have been individually
selected and enlightened by God. Hence, 1QM 12.1f. can declare of God: "Thou hast estab-
lished in [   ] for Thyself the elect of Thy holy people." Vermes supplies 'a community' for the
lacuna, but Lohse (207) is probably closer to the original with the suggestion 'a book' in light of
the following comment that a list of the names of the host of the elect is with God in His holy
habitation.

[237] 1QH 2.13 declares that the Teacher of Righteousness is a banner (of truth) to the
elect of righteousness (לבחירי צדק), while 14.15 can affirm, "All Thine elect are truth," i.e.,
they do not rebel against or seek to alter God's words -- they live in harmony with what has
been revealed to the community.

[238] There is hope in this scroll that perhaps some of those Israelites who have remained
outside the true covenant up to the time of judgment will finally in their distress repent and join
the community. That this document does not envision the wholesale return of all Israel to the
fold is apparent in the next section, where the 'traitors' of Hab 1.13b are interpreted as the
House of Absalom and its council who did not rally to the cause of the Teacher of Righteousness
(cf. 8.9ff.; 9.1ff.; 9.11f.; 10.4-5; 1QS 8.5-6).

whole. Such is not the case at Qumran. In the Scrolls, ישראל is used in at least three[244] distinct senses.[245] Primarily, it is appropriated by the sectarians to express their conviction that in light of the corruption of the larger, ethnic nation, they had become the eschatological community of salvation under the re-established covenant[246] -- they were the true Israel[247] which would be mobilized

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[244] A fourth becomes possible if passages such as CD 8.4,9,12 use the term to designate the Land which the people are to atone for and inhabit.

[245] Interestingly, the term ישראל does not occur in the Hodayot at all. Whether much can be made of this theologically is open to question, but at least it accords well with the fact that for the Covenanters, election was a much more individualized reality than for 'mainstream' Judaism. As Schubert, 84, notes concerning 1QH: "The Hymn Scroll lays greater stress upon the individual election of the individual members of the community than upon the election of the community as a whole. The reason for this lies in the literary structure of the Hymn Scroll, since its theme is the destiny of the individual man" (cf. also 5-6).

[246] Sanders, 257, notes concerning the meaning of the covenant at Qumran: "*It will by now have become clear that we are dealing with the basic soteriological conception of the sect. The distinction is between those outside the covenant* -- whether Gentiles, non-sectarian Israelites or apostate sectarians -- *and those inside. Thus it is said of all three groups of those outside the covenant that they will be destroyed.*" And again, with regard to atonement, he writes (303): "Yet we know that the existence of the community was not really considered to atone for the sins of the Israelites outside the sect, *for they are clearly condemned to destruction*" (my emphasis).

These statements (with which we agree) are difficult to reconcile with Sanders' belief (246-54) that the Covenanters held open the possibility of a large-scale repentance of non-sectarian Israel in the eschaton (cf. below n290).

[247] So Hengel, 1:227: "What the Teacher and his followers felt to be a disastrous development among the Jewish people only left them the possibility of the segregation of a small minority, as the holy remnant and the true Israel." According to Cross (*Library*,78), the apocalyptic view of the Essene movement led some "...into the desert to be born again as the New Israel, to enter into the New Covenant of the last days." Sanders, recognizing the community's conscious structure of priests, Levites and Israelites, labels Qumran a 'mini-Israel' (245). Sutcliffe, 349, notes that Qumran appropriated exclusively for its membership the terms "the sons of Aaron" and "Israel" (1QS 5.21f.), and concludes: "They spoke of themselves as being the whole of Israel and not merely as a part or sect within Israel." Cf. also A. C. Thiselton, "Truth," *NIDNTT* 3:883.

CD bluntly speaks of the community *as* Israel (10.5; 12.8,22; 13.1; 15.5; cf. also 4.4). In 1QS, the primary sign of *true* Israel is a thoroughgoing obedience to the truth, something possible only for the sons of light (cf. 2.22; 5.5-6; 9.6). The Qumranians are 'those whom God chose,' (11.7) in contradistinction to the rest of mankind. In the War Scroll, ישראל refers exclusively to the elect over against the Gentiles and the offenders against the Covenant (1.2) [i.e., "the enemies of the Sons of Light from within the Jewish people" (Yadin, *Message*, 131)], and always with eschatological import. Israel in the endtime will be comprised of the Qumran community and any Israelites who turn to the truth during the final battle (cf. also 1QSa 1.1,20; 2.12). (1QM 17.7-8 indicates that Israel is/will be composed of the sons of truth, who remain a subset of larger Israel; cf. also 3.13-14; 5.1; 15.1.) For the conclusion that the War Scroll offers no hint that ethnic Israel is considered elect, cf. Rogers, 187.

in the 'mother of all battles'.[248] Closely associated with this idea in Qumran

theology is the remnant motif.[249] Secondly, it is used of past Israel, as a means

of demonstrating the continuity between God's original election of the nation

and the present election of the sectarian community as the true remnant of that

ethnic people for whom the privileges and responsibilities of divine election

remain in force.[250] Lastly, it is used of larger, contemporary Israel which has

either actively apostasized or passively[251] drifted into error.[252] This group is

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But perhaps most telling is the gloss added by a sectarian scribe to a fragment containing the end of 1QS 8.12. The original words in 1QS and the fragment are: "If this will pass in Israel...." But in the fragment the phrase "to the community" has been added between the lines as an explanatory comment on the word "Israel" (cf. Flusser, "Essenes," 79 nl1 for further details). This is one key piece of evidence which leads David Flusser (79) to declare, "It was the Dead Sea Sect that claimed to be the *verus Israel.*"

[248] In 1QM the conscious reflection of Israel's tribal organization pattern in the wilderness as found in Numbers (cf. Yadin, *Message*, 130) to describe the Qumran community and its preparations for eschatological battle demonstrate once more the Covenanters' conviction that they were the 'true Israel' of this concluding era of history.

[249] CD 3.12-14,19, for example, reveal the Qumran community to be the remnant of Israel (cf. also 1.4-5).

[250] Cf. especially CD 8.16-17; also 1.3,5,7; 3.13,14; 5.19,20; etc..

[251] Rogers, 202, notes: "Although it is not spelled out precisely, it is apparent that the sectarians regarded those in Israel who passively accepted the leadership of the Wicked Priest to have forfeited any claim to membership in the elect."

[252] Sanders argues particularly forcefully that the sect did not simply appropriate the title 'Israel' for itself, though he acknowledges that they did see themselves in some sense as 'Israel' (245): "This view is accurate in one way, since the sectarians doubtless thought of themselves as having the true covenant, and the covenant community should reasonably be 'Israel'. Yet it is important, in order to understand the sect's self-understanding, to see that it did not simply appropriate the title 'Israel'. The members seem to have been conscious of their status as sectarians, chosen from out of Israel, and as being a *forerunner of the true Israel*, which God would establish to fight the decisive war." Further (246), "When the priests actually bless those entering the covenant, however, they bless not 'Israel' or the 'true Israel', but 'all the men of the lot of God who walk perfectly in all His ways' (1QS 2.1f.). They appropriate Israel's history with God, but they do not call themselves simply 'Israel'." One implication of this, according to Sanders, is that those who join the covenant were already viewed as Israelites. And since the sect held open the possibility that in the future the wicked would repent and join the sectarians, he concludes (247): "This possibility that the term 'Israel' may include the wicked Israelites indicates that there was no clear and systematic appropriation of the title for the sect...."

It seems to us that Sanders has gathered much of the right evidence but drawn the wrong conclusion, for he fails to recognize that by the very nature of their situation the Covenanters were forced to use the term ישראל in the three ways noted above. 'Israel' most nat-

seen as non-elect, although some passages hint that a small percentage may turn

from wickedness at the dénouement of history and embrace the truth as revealed

at Qumran.[253] Hence, when used as an election term, ישראל points almost

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urally refers back to the originally elect, ethnically distinct, Old Testament people of God with whom Qumran seeks to establish continuity; secondly, it must refer generically as well to the ethnic descendants of that people in the present day who have lost that continuity with their elect forefathers; but thirdly, and most importantly, it is used as an election title by the community to describe itself. The fact that during the covenant initiation ceremony the priests do not bless 'Israel' or 'true Israel' indicates nothing more than that the community recognizes the inherent ambiguity of the term and so seeks to clarify exactly whom they are blessing. This is true also for passages such as 1QSa 1.1, where 'Israel' is used of those repentant Jews who join the community in the last days. As Sanders himself notes, a prime Qumran belief is that their covenant is the only true covenant, and that those outside the covenant are outside God's saving mercy (242, 257). Further, he concedes that there are a number of texts in which 'Israel' is applied to the sect as such (246; see n246 above). Finally, although he notes that non-Qumran Israelites are spoken of as among the wicked whom God will destroy (247-8), he does not apparently consider this a strong Qumranian tenet, and argues instead that there are signs pointing to a sectarian belief in the influx into the community of a great number of wicked Israelites who repent during the eschatological war (249-53; cf. also A. Jaubert, *La Notion d'Alliance dans le Judaïsme*, 162f.). It is our opinion that the emphasis at Qumran is just the opposite (cf. 4QpNah 3.4-5) -- that whereas a small percentage of wicked Israel might join the eschatological community of the saved, the majority will be destroyed along with the Gentiles. Hence, Qumran will not join with repentant Israelites in the eschaton to form 'all Israel', but rather the Covenanters' community (as the true Israel) will be enlarged to a degree by those from wicked, ethnic Israel whom God has in the end predestined to repent and belong to the sons of light.

[253] CD 1.16-19 designates the non-elect as those from ethnic Israel who have followed the Scoffer (1.14), abandoning righteousness by seeking 'smooth things' and choosing illusions. According to 2.6-7, these non-elect Israelites will be destroyed, having no remnant or survivor, because from the beginning God had chosen not to elect (= save) them. In the end days, Satan will be unleashed against Israel -- i.e., those outside the Qumran community (4.13-16). During the forty year period following the death of the Teacher, the wrath of God will be kindled against Israel (20.16). After this time, those who have returned to the fear of God will be welcomed into the congregation of the elect, provided they hold fast to the truth. Likewise, any who have transgressed the Law will be expelled to join those cut off from God.

  1QS 1.23 pictures the children of Israel as the source group out of which come to Qumran those individuals who recognize their iniquities while living under the 'dominion of Belial' and who confess and renounce such evils as they enter the New Covenant. The implication here is that larger Israel remains under the power of Belial and judgment of God. Ps 37.21-22 was viewed by the community as indicating that the wicked of Israel would be condemned and annihilated at the day of judgment (4QpPs37 3.10-12).

  The teaching that a few faithful out of ethnic Israel will come to join the true community of God at the end of time is affirmed by 4QpNah 3.4-5; however, until that time non-sectarian Israel remains under the sway of untrustworthy leaders.

  For the use of ישראל to denote larger Israel as distinct from the Covenanters, cf. also 1QS 6.13 and 8.11.

always to the community of the New Covenant who as a consequence of their

election and fulfillment of the Covenant see themselves as the true Israel main-

taining continuity with their elect forefathers in an age of apostasy and

ignorance.[254]

2.1.3.5. עבד -- as might be expected, this term retains its election sense but in

a largely abstracted setting. No longer is it used prominently to highlight the

master-slave or king-subject relationship between God and His people.[255]

Instead, it has developed into a title for the elect, retaining only vestiges of its

original richness.[256] Further, it is now used predominantly to refer to the *indi-*

vidual sectarian in his relationship to God rather than to the corporate people.[257]

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[254] Rogers, 188, summarizes this well: "Generally, in the Qumran literature, the term
ישראל does not define an ethnic entity as the elect....[it] usually refers to an elect (assuredly
Israelite in ethnic background) whose membership is determined by adherence to the demands of
a specific covenantal relationship. This usage seems to imply belief in a 'new Israel' which
supercedes and, at the same time, fulfills the 'old Israel' which was ethnically derived."

[255] As a verb, עבד retains more of this original sense. In 1QpHab 12.13; 13.2,3, the
nations are portrayed as serving idols of stone and wood. CD 5.4 refers to the elders of Israel
who served Ashtaroth in the days when the Law was hidden from them, while 20.21 quotes Mal
3.18 with regard to those who serve God and those who do not. In 1QH 2.33; 16.7,18; 17.14,
עבד carries its typical Old Testament sense of serving God (cf. also 1QSa 1.13; 1QSb 5.28). In
11QT 54-55, it appears in a section quoting Dt 13.2-19 which reminds Israel of her redemption
from Egypt and the subsequent command to serve Yahweh alone.

[256] This is not to say, however, that the Essenes would have rejected the thought of
God as their Master and King with its concomitant characterization of them as His servants
called to do His bidding. Far from it! Yet the term עבד itself has lost this primary sense, and
become instead a favorite self-designation of the worshipping sectarian before his God.
·   1QH 15.24 provides an interesting example of election and service being linked very
closely, as in the Old Testament. Here, however, בחר occurs in parallel not with עבד but with
שרת, a verb typically emphasizing religious or domestic service.

[257] The plural is used in 1QpHab 2.9; 7.5; 1QS 1.3; 4Q166 2.5 in the phrase "His ser-
vants the prophets." Principally, it is found in the singular, occurring overwhelmingly in the
Hodayot (the only relevant election occurrence outside 1QH is 1QS 11.16, which affirms that
God opens the heart of His servant to knowledge). While some of the twenty-one instances
probably refer to the Teacher of Righteousness (cf., for example, 18.6,10) the majority are
rather generic, and could be appropriated by any Covenanter.

2.1.3.6. עדה[258]-- generally translated 'congregation', this term differs from יחד in that it is used in the Dead Sea Scrolls not only of the elect community, but also of other groups.[259] Thus, it can refer to the congregation of the men of falsehood (1QS 5.1; cf. 1QpHab 10.10) -- i.e., wicked Israelites -- from whom the faithful are to separate;[260] or to the heavenly host (1QM 12.7; 1QH 3.22); or, as most often, to the assembly of the elect. The phrase עדת בחירו appears a number of times,[261] underlining the election significance of עדה. In 1QM, where its frequency of usage is second only to 1QSa, עדה is clearly linked to the title "called of God" (3.2), and the phrase עדת אל forms the first of eight designations of the community to be written on their war standards (4.9).[262]

2.1.3.7. עם -- while this word is often used generically, and in the plural typically signifies the Gentile nations, it occurs over fifty times with election sig-

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[258] The nouns סוד ("council, assembly, company") and קהל ("assembly, congregation") typically function as synonyms for עדה (a good example of this is provided by 1QH 2.22-30, where all three nouns are found with reference to the same group). Though employed less frequently than עדה (סוד has 20 relevant occurrences, קהל 18 [including 11QT]) they too may designate elect or non-elect groupings. What we will say concerning עדה pertains to סוד and קהל as well; thus we will not treat them separately in this section.

[259] The Damascus Document at times employs עדה uniquely to indicate particular local congregations of the elect rather than the elect as a corporate whole (cf. CD 13.10,11,13). In such cases, the noun functions as a synonym for מחנה, still referring to the elect, but only those comprising one particular camp or outpost of the elect among many.

[260] In the Hodayot, this group is also designated 'the congregation of Belial' (2.22), 'the congregation of those seeking smooth things' (2.32), and 'the congregation of vanity' (7.34; cf. 6.5). CD 1.12 depicts the community's principal enemies as 'the congregation of traitors' (1.12; cf. 2.1; 3.9; 8.13). In 1QM, the Kittim are spoken of as 'a congregation of wickedness' whom the eschatological army of God should not fear.

[261] Cf. 4Q164 1.3; 4Q171 2.5; 3.5; 4QpPs37 1.5; 2.5. In 4Q171 and 4QpPs 37, עדת בחירו is used in conjunction with עדת האביונים, indicating once again the close connection in Qumran thought between election and the title "the poor ones" (cf. 4Q171 2.20; 3.10; 4QpPs37 2.10).

[262] Again, the phrase קרואי אל occurs as a parallel designation (4.10-11).

Election in the Dead Sea Scrolls

nificance. Usage of עם, however, is not consistent across the Scrolls. In 1QM, where it occurs most frequently (15 times), the term in the singular *always* refers to the sectarians either in their present state or in the time of the eschatological battle.[263] The people are viewed as the army of God through whom God will accomplish His mighty acts of judgment and redemption (6.6; 9.1; 16.1). They are unique among all the peoples of the world, for God has chosen and blessed them alone (10.9).[264]   They are God's people (1.5; 3.13; 14.12), whom He will redeem to be an everlasting people (1.12; 13.9; 14.5), the saints of the covenant (10.10; 16.1), set apart as holy (12.1; 14.2; cf. 4QpPs37 2.7) and promised a heavenly inheritance (13.7). God's election of this people is expressed particularly in 12.1-2: ובחירי עם קודר שמתה לכה בן ס]פר תמות.[265] In 1QpHab 5.3-4, the assurance is given that God will not allow His people to be destroyed by the nations but rather will use the elect to bring judgment upon the nations.[266] In the Hymn Scroll, עם designates either Gentile foreigners whose beliefs and practices have corrupted Israel (2.19), or the non-sectarian Israelites who have been misled by "false teachers" presumably

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[263] Cf. 1.5,12; 3.13; 6.6; 9.1; 10.2,10; 12.1; 14.5,12; 16.1,7,15; etc..

[264] The Hebrew reads: כעמכה ישראל אשר בחרתה לכה מכול עמי הארצות   ומיא. Note the identification here of עם with ישראל. That the reference here pertains not to larger, non-Essene Israel but rather to the Covenanters is strengthened by the fact that עם and ישראל are linked together again two columns later (12.15,16), where Israel clearly designates the victorious army of the elect. Cf. also p.79 above.

[265] Following Lohse's reconstruction of the missing text. Cf. n236 above.

[266] The exact meaning of כול רשעי עמו in 1QpHab 5.5 is difficult to establish. In the context of the whole sentence, "And through their chastisement all the wicked of his people shall expiate their guilt who keep His commandments in their distress," it could refer to "all" or the great majority of non-Qumran Israel, who will repent and keep the Law properly after being severely castigated during the eschatological war, and thus join the true remnant of Israel. Alternatively, it could reflect the predestinarian angle that for those whom God had already chosen (but who had not as of yet received illumination and entered the community) the endtime tribulation would serve as a trigger causing them to embrace the truth. Thus, "His people" could mean either ethnic Israel as a whole or the sectarian community seen from the vantage point of completion.

influenced by foreign ideas (4.6,11,16; cf. CD 6.16).[267]   CD uses עם variously

of the sectarian community (1.21), of the misled and oppressed masses of Israel

(6.16), and of iniquitous Israel which deliberately chooses evil over truth (5.16;

8.8,16; 19.29-30; cf. 1QSa 1.3). Close affinity to the Old Testament is

demonstrated by 1Q34ᵇ 3 2.5 which links the electing activity of God (בחר)

with His good pleasure (רצון) in choosing Israel as a people (עם) for Himself.

2.1.3.8. שארית, פליטה -- these two words will be considered together since

they represent the basic Hebrew remnant vocabulary of the Scrolls.[268]   Relevant

occurrences of שארית are found in 1QM 13.8; 14.8f.; 1QH 6.8; CD 1.4-5 and

2.5-7. פליטה is employed only once in a positive sense to indicate the remnant

saved through divine activity (CD 2.11).[269]   In addition, remnant theology sur-

faces in CD 2.14-3.20 although these terms are absent.[270]   In each case, the

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[267] Interestingly, in these lines of the psalm non-sectarian Israel is referred to as "Thy people." However, in light of 4.17-22 these occurrences of עמכה / עמך do not have ultimate election significance, for the psalmist goes on to say that those who give ear to the teachers of lies and turn aside from the Covenant will be destroyed in judgment.

The remnant idea as expressed in 6.8 seems to reinforce this understanding. Again larger Israel is called "Thy people" (= "those of Thine inheritance"). In the midst of the roaring of the nations, presumably against Israel, the psalmist consoles himself with the thought that God will raise up a remnant of survivors from the larger nation. This remnant he equates with the sectarian community, as is clear by the subsequent material. Thus, although unbelieving Israel may in some sense be called God's people, the title here provides no assurance of God's lasting favor as understood elsewhere by the Essenes to be part and parcel of divine election.

[268] For a fuller description of Hebrew remnant vocabulary as found in the Old Testament, cf. n153 above. Of interest is the fact that שאר does not occur with election-related meaning anywhere in the Scrolls (with the possible exception of the damaged text of 1QM 11.15) and יתר appears with general remnant meaning only four times, either within an Old Testament quotation or as part of a pesher on a prophetic text (cf. 1QpHab 8.15; 9.4,7; 4QpIsa-c 12 1.4).

[269] Both שארית (cf. 1QS 4.13; 1QM 4.2; CD 2.6) and פליטה (CD 2.7) are used negatively to characterize the wicked (unrepentant Israel as well as the Gentile world) to whom God in His judgment will leave no remnant. Indeed the two terms are joined together in the recurring refrain לאין שארית ופליטה (1QS 4.14; 1QM 1.6; CD 2.6-7) to highlight the completeness of God's eradication of the wicked.

[270] Instead, the substantival participle מחזיקים ("those who hold fast") serves to distinguish the faithful remnant from the larger *massa damnata* (3.12,20; cf. 7.13; 20.27; 1QS 5.3; 1QH 4.39).

Qumran community sees itself eschatologically as the remnant of Israel.[271]

Recognizing the canonical principle that God, in remembrance of the covenant

with the forefathers, had always left a remnant to Israel, the community

understands itself as comprising those whom God has chosen in the present day

as recipients of His mercy (CD 1.4; 2.14-3.20), set apart from wayward

mainstream Judaism.[272] Those outside its boundaries constitute the wicked who

have implicitly or explicitly rejected the true Covenant and so will fall under

God's curse of total destruction (1QS 5.13), while the remnant chosen and

saved by grace will enjoy the blessings of God's inheritance.[273]

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[271] *Pace* Sanders, who argues (250) that "The sect did not entitle itself 'remnant' during its historical existence," but rather saw the remnant as defining all who would survive the eschatological judgment of God (including but not limited to themselves). For Sanders the Qumran community did not envision itself as the essential body of the righteous in the last days to whom would be added those non-sectarians who repented through the tribulations of the final conflagration, but rather as one element comprising the remnant of the eschaton. Repentant Israelites do not in the end join themselves to the Covenanters (who make up the true Israel and thus are the faithful remnant), but rather non-sectarian and sectarian blend together in the eschaton to form Israel, the remnant whom God has saved. Thus, Sanders declares (251) that "...the sectarian titles have been appropriated for the remnant of Israel, the 'chosen of His holy people', who will do battle in the final days."

But this, we argue, is to misconstrue the sectarians' self-understanding. If, as we contended earlier (87-91) Qumran saw itself as true Israel, called to separate itself from a reprobate world (including the larger, ethnic mass of Israel) destined for destruction, bound to a New Covenant revealed alone to its leaders by God, assured of its elect status by God's predestinating grace, and commended to a lifestyle of holiness encompassed by intense study of the Law and the mysteries of God as well as by esoteric worship practices, it is hardly likely that the community would not have viewed its position in God's plan as central to God's purposes in their day and the imminent eschatological battle. Sanders rightly notes that many sectarian titles are applied to the remnant of Israel in 1QM. But his explanation that they represent *an appropriation* of sectarian self-descriptions for a non-identical, eschatological group (= the remnant) is hardly convincing. Much more compelling is the view that the sectarians applied their own self-designations to the eschatological remnant because they saw themselves as identical with (or at least largely constitutive of) that remnant.

This is borne out by passages such as CD 2.11 and 1QH 6.7f., which indicate respectively that in each divinely determined era of history God has raised up for Himself a chosen group and called them by name to be a remnant of survivors to repopulate the land, and that Qumran saw itself in the final era as the remnant whom God was already gathering and who would be spared in the coming eschatological cataclysm.

[272] Hengel, 227, emphasizes this separation from larger Israel: "What the Teacher and his followers felt to be a disastrous development among the Jewish people only left them the possibility of the segregation of a small minority, as the holy remnant and the true Israel."

[273] Schubert, 82, summarizes this well: "Although the community regarded itself only as a remnant of a much larger *massa damnata*, it was believed that this small, insignificant rem-

2.2. Election Imagery

As we noted in our previous chapter, election thought and language underwent increasing development and specialization throughout Israel's canonical history. This process continued in Jewish intertestamental literature so that by the time of the Qumran writings, election thought and language had become much more noetic and abstract than before. One result of this is that the wealth of election imagery found in the Old Testament is largely absent from the Scrolls,[274] although certain images remain and new ones materialize based on their particular suitability to Qumranian concerns.

2.2.1. Military Warrior/Protector - Conscripts/Protectees Theme

This theme plays a prominent role in the community's understanding of its election in terms of imminent eschatological war. In view of the impending and ultimate conflagration between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, Qumran saw itself as called (1QM 3.2; 4.10) and mustered for battle (1QM 12.4,8; 19.12). They are the army of God (1QM 3.3; cf. 6.10-14; 7.1; 13.1; 15.4; 18.6; 1QSa 1.21), whom God has established to execute His judgment upon the men of Darkness.[275] Even so, the sectarians recognized that their role

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nant was the sole scion that would inherit the promises of Israel. Anybody who did not belong to the remnant was actually no longer a member of the chosen people of Israel....The community which was made up of the sons of light, which was the planting of righteousness and truth and the chosen remnant, therefore regarded itself as the eschatological whole of Israel."

[274] This is not to say, of course, that the community would have rejected such imagery, but simply that the tenor and development of their election thought did not lend itself so easily to the use of such imagery. When Old Testament election images are encountered in the various sectarian peshers, they are accepted naturally and generally without much comment.

[275] Of particular relevance is 1QM 12.4-5, where it is said of the future that God will muster (פקד) the hosts of His elect (בחיריכה) together with the angelic hosts of heaven so that they might be mighty in battle and thus strike down the rebels of the earth with God's judgment.

in this eschatological war would not be easy -- according to the War Scroll

(1.12-17), the battle would fall into seven divisions or lots; the Sons of Light

will prevail in three, but in three others they will be driven back and fall into

despair; then in the final lot 'the mighty hand of God' will utterly defeat the

forces of Belial, destroying them with no remnant. In the end, it is God Him-

self as the Warrior who unilaterally intervenes to rescue His people and bring

about the preordained result.[276] As for ancient Israel, so for Qumran God

remains her sole and sufficient security.

2.2.2. Gardener - Plant Metaphor

As in the Old Testament, God is periodically depicted in the Dead Sea

Scrolls as the gardener who plants and cultivates the vine/plant/tree of His

people in the fertile, promised land. His initiative and tender care continue to

be highlighted through this election image. Here, however, the community

rather than contemporary, ethnic Israel serves as God's favored planting.[277]

One of Qumran's self-designations is מטעת עולם ("an everlasting plantation" --

1QS 8.5; 11.8; 1QH 6.15; 8.6ff.).[278] In the 1QS occurrences, it is inseparably

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[276] So Vermes (*DSS*, 104) concerning the blueprint of this eschatological war as dis-
closed in 1QM: "The phases of its battle are fixed in advance, its plan established, and its dura-
tion predetermined. The opposing forces are equally matched and only by the intervention of
'the mighty hand of God' is the balance between them to be disturbed when he deals an
'everlasting blow' to 'Satan and all the host of his kingdom'."

Of course, this idea of God as the mighty warrior who fights on behalf of His people to
defeat the enemy is common to Old Testament military election imagery, as we saw previously
(cf. 37-40).

[277] Again, the Essenes view themselves in continuity with past Israel and her initial
divine election. CD 1.2-7 links the idea of a remnant being spared with the imagery of a new
plant root (שורש מטעת) "being made to spring from Israel and Aaron to inherit His land and to
prosper on the good things of His earth." That this metaphor applies strictly to the community
is clear from the subsequent statement that God gave to this repentant group a Teacher of
Righteousness to guide them in the way of His heart.

[278] Cf. Isa 60.21; 61.3; Eth Enoch 10.16; 93.10.

linked with election language: the everlasting plantation constitutes "the elect of goodwill who shall atone for the land and pay to the wicked their reward" (8.6); similarly in 11.8, those whom God has chosen are joined together in harmony with the sons of heaven (i.e., the angels) as an eternal plantation. 1QH 8.5-6 reflects the common Qumran theme that *for His own glory* God has established them as a fruitful plantation of trees.

This metaphor links very naturally with the theme of the Land, but whereas in the Hebrew Scriptures the promise of flourishing in the Land is understood fairly literalistically, through the apocalyptic lens of Qumran thought there is a growing tendency to view the promise of return to the Land as a symbol for the eschatological blessing of eternal life in the habitation of God (though this cannot be pressed for complete consistency).

2.2.3. Builder - Building Metaphor

Though this image derives from the industrial arena, in the Scrolls it often occurs in conjunction with the agricultural gardener-plant metaphor dealt with above (cf. 1QS 8.4-5; 4QFl 1.1-6),[279] for it too emphasizes God's initiative and activity in establishing a people for Himself. Particularly noteworthy are statements suggesting a comparison between the sect and the Temple. Qumran is a House of holiness for Israel (1QS 8.5) or a House of Perfection and Truth in Israel (8.9), set apart to offer spiritual sacrifices and atone for the land (cf. 5.6; 9.5-6).[280] In a short midrash on Is 28.16, the community is identified

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[279] Florilegium begins with a midrash on 2 Sam 7.10, which speaks of God appointing a place for Israel and planting her there (though this portion of the canonical text is missing from the damaged scroll). In the commentary, Israel is called the House which God will build in the last days (1.2,3) and a Sanctuary of men which He has commanded to be built for Himself (1.6) -- a sanctuary replacing the Temple and open only to His Holy Ones. In the context it is clear that Israel here constitutes only those who belong to the community.

[280] Flusser ("Dead Sea," 231) notes: "The sect resembles the Temple not only because its rites are equivalent to the Temple service, but also because priests are as prominent in the sect as in the Temple. Thus the concept of a spiritual temple served, to some extent, to justify

as that precious cornerstone (laid by God Himself) whose foundations cannot be shaken. CD 3.19 declares that God has built His people a sure house in Israel such that all who hold fast to it are destined to live forever and obtain the glory of Adam. Finally, behind the variety of self-descriptive titles employed by Qumran using בית stands the premise that God has built and shaped the community according to His purposes.[281]

2.2.4. Potter - Clay Metaphor

This is one of the Scrolls' preferred images for describing the Creator-creature relationship in general and the particular relationship between God and the elect. Although the metaphor never occurs in parable form as in the Old Testament,[282] the richness of its meaning is nevertheless always implicit. God is still seen as the creator and fashioner of all that exists, but with regard to election this reality is applied individually rather than corporately. Thus, no longer is Israel viewed as the clay which the divine potter shapes for His purposes; instead, the clay (חמר) or dust (עפר) represents each individual whom God has created and formed for a particular destiny.[283]

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the social domination of the priests in the sect although they could not function in their main traditional task."

[281] In addition to the titles already mentioned, we find Qumran spoken of as the House of Truth (1QS 5.6), a House of Community for Israel (= those who walk in perfection: 9.6), the House of the Law (CD 20.10,13), and the House of Separation (20.22).

[282] Cf. above, 46-48.

[283] The final words of the Community Rule (11.20-22) depict representative man as dust which has been kneaded and clay which has been molded by [God's] hand. Human beings are seen here as too base by nature to stand before God's glory, too transitory to be of any real value, and too blind and ignorant to be able to understand, much less dispute, God's counsels.
The recurring phrase יצר חמר (1QH 1.21; 3.23; 4.29; 11.3; 12.26,32; 18.12,25; cf. 1QS 11.22) and its parallel יצר עפר (1QH 18.31) emphasize the molded nature of the material and in their contexts make clear that God is the one responsible for this molding or shaping of human nature, inclination and destiny. Merrill (19) acknowledges this in his study on predestination in the Hodayot: "...the creative act by which God formed all things, especially their energizing spirits, is more than just a static work of bringing all things into being -- it is also the time and means employed by the Creator to give "inclination"of will to every part of the

Perhaps more than any other, this theme for Qumran accentuates the

sovereignty of God's purposes over human affairs as well as over history in

general.[284] In Qumran anthropology, the description of human beings as crea-

tures of clay or dust serves to underscore mankind's fleeting mortality, crea-

turely dependence and inherent sinfulness over against the Creator's eternal and

righteous nature.[285] Qumran echoes the creation theology of Gen 2, but

develops a radically pessimistic view of man not found there.[286] 1QH 1.21b-22

epitomizes this perspective:

ואני יצר החמר ומגבל המים סוד הערוה ומקור הנדה
כור העוון ומבנה החטאה רוח הרועה ונעוה בלא בינה...

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universe. And even though He has placed within each spirit its own יצר, He will judge each one
for its works (I,9,16)."

[284] Concerning the place of the sovereignty of God in Qumran thought, Mansoor (159)
writes: "The belief in God's sovereignty was a major aspect of Qumran doctrine. God, they
believed, was the maker of all things, the giver of all gifts, and the director of the destinies of
men. God was at the very center of life and history."

[285] These elements are evoked by the haunting questions of 1QH 3.23-24 (cf. also
4.29-30):ואני יצר החמר מה אני מגבל במים ולמי נחשבתי ומה כוח לי. The psalmist recognized that
left to his own devices, he stands in the realm of wickedness and his lot is with the damned
(3.24-25); he has no hope (3.27) and no means of escape from judgment and death (3.29). Iniq-
uity is his master from the womb to the grave (4.30) and he can do no righteousness unless God
establishes his way (4.31).
    The verb גבל ("to knead") used in 3.23-24 (cf. also 12.24ff.; 13.14-15) is originally an
industrial term now employed poetically to describe God's creative activity (cf. Greenfield,
162). While not found in the Old Testament, it is used occasionally by later rabbis (cf. Tosefta
Ma'asroth 3.13; Shabbat 12.14; 24.3; Baba Meṣia 10.5; 11.6; Tosefta, Kelim, Baba Qamma
3.6).

[286] For greater elaboration on this point, cf. Maier, 168-82. He concludes concerning
Qumran's understanding of human nature (182-3): "Qumran betrachtet den Menschen positiv,
insoweit es im Anschluß an den Genesisbericht in ihm den Herrscher über die andern irdischen
Geschöpfe sieht. In den Verdergrund schiebt sich aber eine negative Betrachtungsweise: Man
schweigt von der imago dei und streicht die Vergänglichkeit, natürliche Blindheit und
Sündhaftigkeit des Menschen, seine Schwäche und sein unreines Entstehen heraus. Weil der
Mensch absolut dem Schöpfergott gegenübergestellt wird, herrscht eine statische Betrachtung
vor. Der weisheitliche Pessimismus bezüglich des Menschen ist in Qumran noch wesentlich
verstärkt und in der vollkommenen Abhängigkeit von Gott zeichnet sich schon deutlich eine
prädestinatianische Tendenz ab."

Of direct relevance to the theme of election are passages such as 1QH 3.21, where God is praised by the psalmist for having "shaped [him] from the dust for the everlasting Council", as well as 10.4-5, which assert that the psalmist, a mere clod of earth, understands the divine mysteries only because God has desired and willed it.[287]

3. Election and Predestination in the Dead Sea Scrolls

3.1. Methodological Issues

One of the difficulties inherent to the determination of the nature and scope of divine election in the Dead Sea Scrolls is the ambiguity of intention behind the language used. This is most pronounced in 1QH and related hymnic material, where passages on the surface seem obviously individualistic, but upon further reflection may reflect a deeper corporate understanding among the Covenanters. Such a development would parallel the usage of "individualistic" biblical psalms in the corporate worship life of larger Israel. How then can one discern whether or not Qumran truly diverged from mainstream Israel concerning election thought? What criteria ought we utilize to determine whether relevant election texts are genuinely individualistic in orientation or simply couched in individualistic language but reflective of a corporate understanding?

The following operative criteria have been applied in light of this issue: 1) *Greater weight is to be given to individualistic election statements found in doctrinal sections than to such statements in worship-oriented material.* This is based on the assumption that less ambiguity of language will attach to election

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[287] 1QH 15.21 also speaks of man as dust, but goes on to use יצר in connection with God's shaping the human spirit (רוח) and establishing his work from the beginning, pointing to the conclusion that "the way of all the living proceeds from Thee." This leads the psalmist two lines later to affirm the fact that God has *chosen* the members of the Council, i.e., the Covenanters, before all others to be His people.

statements in theologically explicative material than to similar statements utilized in community worship. 2) *Election texts are more likely to bear an individualistic orientation when they occur in the context of a Creator-creature motif.* This will apply in both didactic and hymnic texts. 3) *Within hymnic material, first person singular election language is a useful, but not sufficient, pointer toward individualistic orientation.* 4) *Again within hymnic material, where election passages occur in the context of personal (as distinct from corporate) confession of sin, the election emphasis is likely individualistic.* This is even more strongly indicated when such sins are seen in terms of creaturely rebellion rather than covenantal transgression.

3.2. The Individualism of Election in Qumran Thought

At Qumran, the concept of predestination overarched and influenced most other theological perceptions, including that of election.[288] Since God had ordained all things to their respective paths and destinies, the fate of each human being as well had been divinely determined in advance.[289] Thus, the idea of election, while not losing its association with Jewish ethnicity, became highly individualized. Qumran continued to affirm the validity of God's election of Israel's forefathers, but denied that this election was automatically transferred to succeeding generations, and specifically that it belonged to any

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[288] This is not to deny other factors which contributed to the prominence and sharply-drawn character of election at Qumran. Numerous scholars have highlighted sociological influences which raised the doctrine to a high level of importance for the sectarians as they hammered out their own identity over against mainstream Judaism.

[289] Hengel, 219, observes: "Before the world came into being, God established the whole order of creation and history in an unalterable way through the plans of his thought (מחשבת/ה). Everything is predestined from the very beginning, including the individual human life with its thoughts and actions..." (cf. 1QS 11.11,19; 1QH 4.13,38; 11.7; 18.22). Burrows, 272, notes Qumran's belief in the divine foreordination of all things good and evil, both in the creation at large and within the human heart.

Israelites outside the New Covenant of the sectarian community.[290] This

emphasis at Qumran on the individualism of soteriological election was a sig-

nificant departure from the traditional Hebrew and Old Testament view of

Israel, the ethnic nation, as God's elect. However, the Old Testament concepts

of remnant and new covenant lent themselves quite easily to this develop-

ment,[291] and were used with this individualistic sense at Qumran.

3.3. The Nature of Predestination in Qumran Thought

Since God has from the beginning determined the fate or lot (גורל)[292] of

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[290] Sanders, 270, here correctly notes that "the sectarian conception of the election is that it is an election of individuals rather than of the nation of Israel. Those outside the sect are universally considered sinners doomed to destruction." (This affirmation does not cohere easily with Sander's earlier arguments that the Covenanters held open the possibility of wicked Israel's return to the fold in the eschaton. Cf. our discussion in n246 above.)

We can agree cautiously with Burrows (263) when he concludes his survey of relevant material with the statements: "In all this it is clear that for the Covenanters election had to do not merely with the chosen people as a whole but with individuals," and "The election of the nation is of course still presupposed, but the stress is now on an election of individuals who have joined the community," as long as one understands that the terms 'nation' and 'chosen people' would be carefully defined by Qumran to exclude those Israelites who did not accept and devote themselves to what the sectarians considered to be the truth God had originally revealed to the forefathers and then made known once again to their exclusive community.

[291] L. Coenen, 539, summarizes this well: "It is only a continuation of these ideas when the OT teaching about the difference between the true spiritual Israel and mere political and physical membership of the people, especially in the context of resistance to Hellenistic 'infiltration', led the devout to separate themselves off into exclusive groups. Inevitably this brought the concept of individual election to the fore....This is especially apparent in the Qumran texts...in which consciousness of being chosen leads not only to a feeling of superiority over other nations, and over the ungodly in their own...,but also to a direct hatred for those who have been rejected (1QS 1.4)." While we would take issue with Coenen over his assertion that individual consciousness of election led the Qumranians to feelings of superiority over the non-elect (cf. Burrows, 263-4, for evidence that assurance of election was accompanied by an acute sense of personal sinfulness), Coenen's summary otherwise does a commendable job of tracing this line of development.

It is interesting that this strongly individualistic approach to election is not generally found in other intertestamental literature. N. Bentwich (*Hellenism*, 173) notes that the Essenes and Theraputae were the only two Jewish sects decisively characterized by an emphasis on individual salvation and the call to break away from the national life and law of mainstream Judaism.

[292] The strong connection between this term and the concept of predestination in the Scrolls has been demonstrated by Beardslee ("Lots," *NT* 4 (1960), 247). He concludes that in the Scrolls גורל enjoys a heightened disposition as a divine, irrevocable decree typically indicating something predestined.

every human being and, by way of corollary, retains for Himself sole

responsibility for choosing who belongs to His covenant and who does not, elec-

tion at Qumran must be understood in the light of divine predestination as

promulgated by the Scrolls.[293]

The centrality of the concept of predestination among the Essenes is sup-

ported by the fact that contemporary writers (Josephus [*Ant.* 13.5.9],[294] Philo

[*Omnis Probis*, §80; 84]) recognized it as a prominent characteristic of the

sect's theology.[295] But even more compelling is its prevalence, both directly[296]

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[293] Sanders' declaration (261; cf. also Marx, 168) that "The idea of God's electing
grace was not formulated in opposition to man's freedom of choice, and in this sense it is
anachronistic to speak of 'predestination'....The statements of God's determining grace answer
another question than the question of whether or not man is free" is, in our opinion, highly mis-
leading. It is true that the concept of predestination provides the major justification for the
Covenanters' belief in their own elect status. But, as we will show below, it is also used to jus-
tify the belief that all those outside the community will perish. In light of Qumran's vigorous
emphasis on the all-embracing sovereignty of the Creator (who is active in predisposing every
human heart according to His purposes) and on the weak, sinful, spiritually blind nature of man,
one may not assume that God's electing grace submits before, or actively works alongside, the
human will. In their deepest reflections, the Covenanters realize that their own natural tenden-
cies (which they share with all human beings) lead them away from God. Apart from God's
electing grace they would not have chosen to enter the New Covenant.
    Whether or not the concept of predestination was formulated over against that of human
free agency rather than something else is not the point. What does matter is that for Qumran the
predestining work of God is prior to and comprehends all creaturely activity, including that of
the human will. Merrill is closer to the mark when he says (58): "Predestination did not con-
tradict free will; it provided the rationale as to why men chose 'freely' as they did."

[294] Josephus's repeated reference to fate (εἱμαρμένη) in explication of the Essene
views on human destiny does not necessarily reflect the notion that the Essenes believed in a
rigid and impersonal determination of all things by some abstract force, i.e., fatalism (cf. Corp.
Herm. 1.9). The terminology of Josephus here is probably shaped more by his intended Hel-
lenistic audience than by Essene theology (although Maier (262) feels that the phrase πάντων
τὴν εἱμαρμένην κυρίαν found in *Ant* 13.172 echoes the original, Hebrew formulation of the
Qumran tenet of predestination as found in 1QS 3.15).
    Hengel, 1:230, is right to draw a clear distinction between the philosophy of fatalism
and the predestination of Qumran: "Despite its predestinarian basis, what happened in the world
did not rest on impersonal fate, which simply expresses strict causality within a world
understood along monistic lines, but on God's plan, as the free disposition of his personal trans-
cendent power." One may indeed speak of a strong sense of determinism in the thought of
Qumran (cf. Kuhn, *Sektenschrift*, 20-22; Cross, *Library*, 93), provided this is understood in
light of an overall plan willed and carried out by God according to His good pleasure.

[295] Luz, 232-33, notes: "*Die Prädestinationslehre Qumrans ist theozentrisch angelegt*:
Strafgericht über die Sünder und Erwählung der Gerechten dienen der Ehre Gottes."

[296] Cf. 1QS 3.15-25; 11.7-9,11,19; 1QH 1.18-24; 4.13,21,38; 10.5-7; 11.7; 14.14;

and as a fundamental presupposition for other statements,[297] in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Qumran stands at the end of a stream of Jewish wisdom tradition emphasizing a cosmological/ethical dualism and divine predestination.[298] In common with the earlier tradition, the Qumran writings are undergirded by a wisdom theology of creation, where the intricately conceived plan of God serves as the source for all earthly happenings, both good and evil (cf. Is 45.7; Sir 33.7-15), and creation is described in dualistic terms of opposing pairs. However, while the earlier tradition refrains from explicitly attributing human decision-making and acting to the predestining will of God, Qumran sharpens and clarifies the tradition in just such a direction.[299]

This profession of a complete predestination[300] is seen most clearly in the Teaching on the Two Spirits found in 1QS 3.13-4.26. Many scholars believe that this unit of material comprises the foundation of Qumran theology upon which most everything else is built.[301] Hengel notes its literary resemblance to a catechism, marked by an accumulation of abstract terms forming "systematic

15.13-19; 18.22; 1QM 13.9-11; CD 2.6-8; 4.4-6.

[297] E.g., individual election (as noted above), historical and anthropological dualism, astrological horoscopes and the fixed courses of the stars, the mysteries of God and their revelation to humanity, to name a few.

[298] For a fuller treatment of this theme, cf. G. Maier, 176-80, 228-36.

[299] Luz, 232 n19, observes: "Es ist überhaupt auffällig, wie oft Aussagen über Gottes Schöpfertätigkeit und solche über Erwählung und Prädestination miteinander verbunden erscheinen: 1QH. 1,7ff.; 10,2ff.; 12,24ff.; 15,13ff. etc."

[300] Cf. Luz, 228-234.

[301] So, e.g., Kuhn, Scrolls, 97; Becker, 84; Hengel, 1:219; Maier, 222-23; Lichtenberger, 123f.; Stegemann, 125f.

theological statements in extremely concentrated form."[302] In this central text,

one finds a cosmological and psychological dualism of good and evil,

represented by the two divinely-created Spirits who act within and upon every

creature to bring about God's predestined will.[303] Employing the creation

motif, 1QS 3.15ff. emphasizes the sovereign and comprehensive plan

(מחשבת/ה)[304] of God and the schema according to which all human beings func-

tion and live out their destiny.[305] Thus, divine predestination applies not only to

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[302] Hengel 1:218-9. He goes on to say: "We may see here the concern for a
systematic, indeed almost 'philosophical' conceptuality which had not appeared earlier in
Hebrew thought." Maier, following Hengel, calls this section the earliest dogmatic
'compendium' of Judaism (223) and argues that it summarizes that collection of beliefs which
differentiate Qumran from the rest of Judaism (224).

Becker, 84, comments that the Teaching on the Two Spirits "...in grundsätzlicher
lehrhafter Form eine theologische Gesamtschau entfaltet, die in inhaltlicher Prägnanz und konse-
quenter Gedankenfolge eine in sich geschlossene theologische Konzeption entwickelt, die im
Judentum ihresgleichen sucht."

[303] According to 3.25-6, God is the creator of both the Spirit of Light and the Spirit of
Darkness, and as such they are completely dependent upon Him. Having been established by
God, these Spirits rule over and direct every activity and deed within the created order --
nothing happens outside the realm of these dualistic powers. Wernberg-Møller
(Reconsiderations, 428) acknowledges that 3.25 carries a "somewhat deterministic ring," partic-
ularly in light of the fact that column 4 goes on to describe how the orientation of every human
being is fixed according to portions of the Spirits of Truth or Falsehood allotted to him.

In light of this, it is surprising that Rabin can write that "It must be realized, however,
that complete predestination really applies only to two classes: the wicked, whom 'God has not
chosen from of old, and before they were established he knew their works' (CDC ii.7-8), and
the 'elect', whose names, life-dates, and 'exact statement of their works' are predictable (CDC
iv.4-6)," as if there might be some third class of individuals whose orientation and fate is not
determined by God through the operations of the two Spirits. Qumran knows of no such
'independent' class -- in light of their wisdom theology of creation, all creatures operate under
the determinative activity of these dualistic, ruling powers who in turn do God's preordained
bidding.

[304] In 3.15, מחשבתם is used of creaturely plans in a context which asserts that before
human beings come into existence their plans have already been determined by God (ולפני היותם
הכין כול מחשבתם). Immediately following, in 3.16, מחשבת is used again, but this time with its
predestinarian meaning of 'the divine plan' according to which all things are created and
ordered.

For other examples of מחשבת as the divine plan, cf. 1QS 11.11,19; 1QM 13.2; 14.14;
1QH 4.13; 11.7 and 18.22. These occurrences echo the belief that all things transpire in accord-
ance with God's plan due to the exercise of His might and wisdom for the sake of His glory.

[305] The main purpose of this material, as Maier notes (226-7, 260-1), is to explain the
looming question at Qumran of why one human being is righteous and another wicked (or why
some are elect and others not). The offered solution, stated simply, is that God, in His
sovereign creation and direction of all that is and happens (3.16) has determined it so.

the created order apart from the sphere of human will,[306] but to human will as well. Through His determination of the activity of the two Spirits and their portions assigned to every individual by divine decree, God has preordained the course and destiny of every life.[307] The Covenanters would not have subscribed to the Enlightenment principle that 'All men are created equal.' For them, each individual's lot has been divinely predetermined to a destiny of light or darkness (cf. 1QH 14.11-12).[308]

This high view of the sovereignty of God, coupled with the divine creation of the two spirits, enabled the community to embrace the notion that God was in some way behind all that happened, without at the same time making Him the author of evil (cf. Philo, *Quod Omnis* §84; Treves, 450; Hengel, 229f.; Maier, 263).

[306] As the Pharisees and later rabbis were wont to believe. Mishna Abot 2.19 affirms divine foreknowledge but not foreordination: "Everything is foreseen, yet freedom of choice is given."

[307] This is not to say that the God of the Dead Sea Scrolls lacks a preference for good over evil. Quite the contrary. According to 1QS 3.25-4.1, although God has created both ruling spirits and determined all activity through them, nevertheless "He loves the one everlastingly [i.e., the spirit of Light] and delights in its works forever; but the counsel of the other [i.e., the spirit of Darkness] He loathes and for ever hates its ways." Likewise, He loves those who belong to the spirit of Light (viz., the elect) and hates those consigned to the spirit of Darkness (the reprobate). For greater detail on this matter, cf. our discussion above on אהב in the Qumran literature, 73-75.

The elect are called to mirror this divine attitude of love and hate, thereby emphasizing in an affective way their understanding of the soteriological division of humanity into two groups. Indeed, one's status in the sect is to be determined in part by how fully one displays this divine love and hatred in their appropriate spheres (1QS 9.15f.).

[308] Human beings do not have the opportunity to "choose sides," but rather must live under the spirit to which they have been assigned. "There is a tendency placed within every spirit of man, an inclination which will ultimately lead to either destruction or salvation, depending upon whether or not God allows it to take its course. According to his God-given disposition, man is placed in one of two categories or "lots" -- that of the righteousness of the Elect or the lot of the wicked" (Merrill, 23; cf. 27).

Further evidence of this may be found in the community's obsession with horoscopes. Cf. 4Q 186, where certain physiognomic features of the human body as well as stellar configurations at the point of birth are seen indicators of one's ultimate destiny. In particular, these reflect the varying portions of light and darkness comprising the spirit of individual in question, and thus the fate to which that individual is predestined (cf. 2.5ff.; 3.2ff.) This same concept of a mixture of portions of light and darkness in the human spirit is found in 1QS 4.20ff., where the question is raised as to what will become of such people. The answer proffered there is that in the eschaton God will remove the portions of darkness from the hearts of those predestined to salvation. The rest will face His wrath and final judgment.

Leaney's attempt to soften this double predestinarian slant by arguing that some are saved and others rejected because the former have more light than darkness (155-6) fails to consider God's determinative role in individually meting out the portions of light and darkness

Besides the Community Rule, the Hymn Scroll provides ample testimony to Qumran's belief in complete or double predestination (cf. in particular 1QH 1.7-31; 3.19-25; 15.12-22).[309] God has known, before creation, all the thoughts and actions of his human creatures, and inscribed all things on a tablet of remembrance (1.16-24; cf. 16.10).[310] He has established *from the womb* both the righteous for the appointed time of His good pleasure (למועד רצון) and the wicked for the Day of Slaughter (ליום הרגה).[311] He is the one who causes the elect to persevere in the right path (2.35-6).[312]

What Merrill offers as a summary of his work in 1QH may serve quite properly as a summary for Qumran thought in general (57): "Without question the basic theme of 1QH is a predestination involving a rather rigid

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which each person receives and operates under. Vermes sees this clearly: "They, the elect, were guided by the spirit of truth in the ways of light, while the unprivileged, Jew and Gentile alike, were doomed to wander along paths of darkness" (*DSS*, 42-43).

[309] Merrill, in his study devoted to an investigation of predestination in the Hymns of Thanksgiving, concludes (23): "1QH...is replete with vocabulary and phraseology whose purpose is to establish the fact that the author of the document believed in predestination. Predicated upon God's creation of all things as a product of His foreknowledge, the teaching goes on to state unequivocally that every part of creation is 'formed' by the Creator to achieve His sovereign 'pleasure.'"

[310] In 1.23-4, סופר (cf. Job 19.23) and חרת זכרון evoke the idea of a book of destiny, upon whose pages God has written beforehand the course and final outcome of every human life.

[311] 1QH 15.15 and 17 respectively. While the Scrolls offer a number of glimpses into God's purposes in the predestination of the elect to salvation (cf. **Section IV** below), only in 15.19-20 do we find any substantial indication of God's purpose in the predestination of the wicked for destruction: that they may be punished in full view of the rest of creation, thereby serving as a sign of warning and a demonstration of the sacred glory and retributive power of God.

Luz concludes, 232: "Die Aussage der vorzeitlichen Verwerfung der Gottlosen und damit die gemina praedestinatio findet sich also in Qumran, wenn auch nur im Gebet und selten."

[312] The hiphil of חתת underlines the divine source of strength behind the psalmist's ability to maintain his commitment to the New Covenant in the face of outside animosity. That the elect are established and maintained in their faith by divine grace is a common theme in the Scrolls (cf. e.g., 1QH 12.34f.; 17.21).

dualism....Men are assigned to one or the other of these spirits purely as a result of the will or 'pleasure' of God. All of this is a result of the predetermined plan of a sovereign God."

3.4. Election and Free Will

In spite of all that has been said thus far, it seems beyond doubt that the sectarians in some way embraced a belief in the freedom of the human will. Particularly with regard to the taking of covenantal oaths in joining the community, human choice plays a major role (cf. 1QS 6.13). Those entering the Covenant are called "the volunteers" (המתנדבים -- 1QS 5.1,6,8,10,21f.; or הנדבים -- 1QS 1.11), or those who have chosen the way (בוחרי דרך -- 1QS 9.17f.). One of the major themes of 1QH is that of repentance toward God, an activity presuming human choice.[313] Occasionally, one finds texts in which both divine election and the dynamic choice of the individual are set side by side (1QS 9.14-17; 1QH 6.5-10; 16.10; 1QpMic 7f.). And finally, the Scrolls are permeated with the expectation of reward and punishment in the endtime, seemingly implying a human responsibility (and thus freedom of choice) for behavior which is ultimately judged by God.[314] How is one to make sense of all this?

Some have argued that the Qumranians were not theologians, and hence

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[313] However, a number of scholars argue that for Qumran repentance is also seen as a gift of grace imparted only to the elect, and hence is an act of the human will only in response to God's compelling grace (cf. Licht, "Doctrine," 96; Burrows, *More Light*, 295; Hengel, 223; Maier, 202-205). Maier compares the Dead Sea Scrolls with Ben Sira and the Psalms of Solomon on the theme of repentance and concludes that while Ben Sira echoes with a call to repentance ("Turn to the Lord and forsake your sins..." -- 17.25ff.) which PssSol develop even further, Qumran lacks this admonitory language and adopts instead the position: "Not with man lies his way and man does not determine his step, but the decision lies with God..." (cf. 1QS 11.10f; 1QH 15.12-14).

[314] Treves, 451 n9: "The ancient Jews generally believed in the freedom of the will as a basis for the moral responsibility of man."

either ignorant of the inconsistency or simply uninterested in developing a tidy and consistent systematic theology.[315] But it is difficult to imagine that a group so enthusiastic about studying the Law and the mysteries of God,[316] and able to produce such elaborate theological deliberations in their own writings, should be either ignorant or apathetic concerning these issues.

Other scholars have proposed that the sect perhaps knew of the conflict in thought, but purposely allowed both elements to stand on their own, thereby tacitly conceding a paradox.[317] Though this is possible, it seems to us in light of the priority and emphasis laid upon divine predestination and election in the Dead Sea Scrolls, human freedom of choice is not accorded equal independent status. Rather, free will seems to find its place within a predestinarian system.

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[315] E.g., Schubert, 61, writes: "...the question still remains open whether the Qumrân Essenes believed in a doctrine of absolute predestination. If this was the case, it was by no means consistently thought out. One rather gains the impression that for them everything -- including the acts of men -- is determined in the knowledge of God, but that this still does not absolutely determine man, for he is able either to go on sinning or to repent." Cf. also Kuhn, *Scrolls*, 99.

For Sanders, 268, "The 'doctrine of predestination' in the Scrolls is best seen as *answering the question of why the Covenanters are elect*, rather than whether or not there is free will" (cf. also 265-67).

Merrill, 23, declares that free will was not seen as an issue at Qumran, for no concern is evident over the paradox of God's predestining decree and man's freedom to choose. This is curious, in light of Merrill's attempt later in his thesis to link divine predestination with foreknowledge in order to preserve freedom of choice (cf. below, n318).

Luz, 230, also holds that the issue did not arise for Qumran, and he dismisses Nötscher's attempt to relativize predestination into prescience (230 n15) as misguided.

[316] Wherever ten or more Essenes lived in community they were to set apart one of their number (probably on a rota system) to engage in a constant study of the Law, day and night. Additionally, all the members were to join corporately "for a third of every night of the year to read the Book and to study Law and to pray together" (1QS 6.6f.).

[317] Burrows, 336, writes: "The problem of reconciling this doctrine [foreordination] with commands and exhortations implying freedom of choice is left unresolved in the Dead Sea Scrolls, as it is in Paul's epistles; in fact, while the question is earnestly faced in the Epistle to the Romans, it is not even raised in the Scrolls. The Qumran texts afford no examples of such theological arguments as we find in the letters of Paul."

Holm-Nielsen, 281 n16, offers an interesting twist by suggesting that while a strict predestinarian approach might remain true for Qumran in theory, in terms of practical experience they developed a working understanding of human responsibility in the day-to-day affairs of life.

A third group acknowledges Qumran's theological acumen, arguing that the Covenanters resolved the conflict by viewing predestination and election as dependent upon divine foreknowledge -- God has chosen in advance those whom He knew beforehand would choose Him.[318] However, the passages most often cited in support of this (CD 2.6f.; 1QH 1.28; 15.17-19) do not in fact suggest that God has selected individuals on the basis of their future activities. They do affirm a link between foreknowledge and predestination, but this could imply that God's advance knowledge is due to His predestining activity rather than the reverse.[319]

A fourth and final group of scholars argues that for Qumran human free will plays a subservient role to God's sovereign predestination.[320] Thus, behind man's choosing lies not an independent, free will, but God's purposeful determination (cf. 1QS 10.11-13).[321] While much of the language and ritual of

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[318] Nötscher, 175-76; Ploeg, 115-18; Mansoor, 102; Merrill, 41, 50-51,57-58. Merrill presents this in a most methodical form (58): "In their system, God had assigned the destinies of all men before their creation on the basis of His foreknowledge of how they would respond to His gracious overtures. He provided the means and urging for their coming into the Covenant of the Elect, an urging which they voluntarily accepted and followed.

Ploeg, 219-20, draws a parallel between the concept of predestination in 1QH 15.15-21 and that of Romans 9, though he concludes that Paul "...goes perhaps even further, at least in his way of expressing himself."

[319] CD 2.6-7 is a case in point. The writer affirms that "from the beginning God chose not the wicked; He knew their deeds before ever they were created...." According to Nötscher, this amounts to relative predestination on the ground of divine foreknowledge (175). To Sanders, on the other hand, "...God's choice precedes and determines the transgression, for 2.13 explicitly says that 'those whom He hated He caused to stray'" (261). The immediate context as well as the theological superstructure of beliefs at Qumran favor Sanders' interpretation.

1QH 15.17-19 raises the same issue. In lines 18 and 19, it is affirmed that the wicked will be massacred *because* they walk in the way which is not good, having chosen what God hates. This seems to reflect the standard Old Testament understanding that punishment serves as just deserts for a life of wickedness. However, line 17 acknowledges not only divine foreknowledge of the life course of the wicked ("You have set them apart from the womb for the Day of Massacre"), but divine *intent* in creating (בראל) the wicked for the appointed time of destruction. In the context of the argument, this divine determination precedes and shapes the human choice which issues in a certain path of life (*pace* Merrill, 50).

[320] Hengel, 223-24, 230; Maier, 200-22.

[321] Even Nötscher, who feels more comfortable with a softer view of predestination, acknowledges Qumran's belief in God's predetermining activity behind the human will: "Wie er

the community is uncritically adopted from the traditions of the Hebrew Scriptures, it is now placed in a strongly predestinarian framework and takes on that orientation. Human choice is always presupposed, but now its rests on a predestinarian base (CD 2.15; 1QH 9.10; 16.10).[322] While perhaps not completely consistent concerning the reason for God's punishment of the wicked, Qumran as often as not attributes this to the determinative plan of God. Reward and punishment in the eschaton are understood more as demonstrations of the divine glory than simply as logical consequences of moral or immoral behavior.[323]

It seems to us this last position accords most fully with the overall tenor of the major Scrolls. With regard to election, God's predestining work forms the background against which His choice of individuals must be seen, even when election is spoken of with reference to human distinctives. Sanders concludes that Qumran offers two answers to the question of why God chooses some Israelites and not others, both of which could be seen as true, depending on the circumstances: 1) God chooses as He has sovereignly decided; 2) God chooses those who choose Him and rejects those who reject Him.[324] This is all right as far as it goes, but perhaps a better summary of Qumran's position is found in the idea that God's predestination of the elect is the basis upon which the chosen are enabled to choose Him in turn. For the Covenanters, the inde-

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sich entscheidet, wie er selbst wählt, das ist eben auch vorbestimmt" ("Schicksalglaube," 39).

[322] In light of this, Maier, 209, concludes: "Man kann nur sagen, daß solche termini wie 'Willige' oder 'Wählen' einer Sprachwelt entstammen, die unreflektiert noch mit der menschlichen Willensfreiheit rechnete; aber jetzt in Qumran sind sie in den Rahmen eines prädestinatianischen Kontextes eingefügt."

[323] For a detailed *apologia* concerning this perspective on predestination and free will at Qumran, cf. Maier, 200-22.

[324] Sanders, 266.

pendent and sovereign activity of the Creator God always transcends and determines the decisions of man, who remains lost in his weak, sinful and transitory nature unless quickened by God.

4. The Various Roles Played by Election in the Dead Sea Scrolls

Given the community's intense devotion to the Hebrew Scriptures along with their corpus of new revelation, it should not surprise us to find the concept of election playing the same major roles for Qumran as it did for Old Testament Israel, though with some unique modifications.

These modifications include: the development of a highly individualized concept of election which increasingly supplants the corporate view found in the Old Testament; the consequent sundering of bonds between the divine election and Israel as an ethnic whole, replaced by a new covenant linking God's elective favor to those comprising the enclave; the close interconnection between election and divine predestination as seen within the Jewish wisdom context of creation theology; and the sharpened emphasis on eschatological salvation and doom for the elect and non-elect respectively, due to the apocalyptic fervor prevailing at Qumran. These new elements color the roles played by election in the Scrolls.

4.1. Chosen by Grace to Be a Divine Possession

Qumran's identity and meaning were intimately bound up with the awareness that it had been chosen to belong to God. In common with the Old Testament people of God, the Covenanters affirmed that their election was all of grace. Due to their highly pessimistic view of human nature, this awareness of the grace of God in election was perhaps even more highly emphasized in their theology than among their forebears.

Ethnic descent from the patriarchs is seen as a necessary but insufficient requirement for belonging to God's people. Thus, while the Gentiles are always considered non-elect, the majority of Israelites also fall within this category. The elect belong to God not only because they are Jews but because God had individually predestined them for salvation in His love and for His glory.

Unlike in some writings of the Old Testament, this divine love for the elect is not fundamentally based on Yahweh's gracious promises to the patriarchs. Rather, it is traced back to the sovereign and predetermining will of the Creator who chooses those whom He loves and rejects those whom He hates (cf. 1QH 14.10ff.). This determinative divine will is not arbitrary or capricious, but rests on God's intent to glorify Himself and to design all things according to His good pleasure (1QS 11.16,17-18; 1QH 1.8,10,15; 10.2,6,9; 15.15). Thus, in the context of election, the Covenanters could refer to themselves as 'the sons of His good pleasure' (בני רצונו -- 1QH 4.32f.; 11.9; or 'the elect of His good pleasure' (בחירי רצון -- 1QS 8.6).[325]   Since God creates and establishes all things for His glory (1QS 3.16; 1QH 1.9f.; 10.10-12; 11.7; 18.22), the elect have been chosen to demonstrate His mercy (1QH 2.23; 7.24; 15.14-17; 1QM 14.14) while the wicked, through their punishment, reflect the glory of His justice and power (1QS 4.18; 1QH 2.24f.; 15.20-21; 1QM 12.7,10).[326]

The Covenanters' awareness of belonging to God was linked to the conscious acceptance of the teachings of the community, loyalty to the Teacher of

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[325] Schubert, 136-7, notes that רצון corresponds almost exactly with the Greek εὐδοκία and the Latin *voluntas*, and argues that at Qumran as well as in the New Testament, they typically highlight the good, elective will of God -- His good pleasure. Passages such as 1QH 10.5-9 highlight the impotence and lostness of the individual who is not a recipient of the gracious will of God and must instead fend for himself.

[326] This theme of divine glory manifested in eschatological judgment is seen also in the phrases written on the battle standards of the army of God, particularly when they return from the fray (1QM 4.8; cf. 4.6).

Righteousness, and a consistent compliance with the precepts of the New

Covenant.[327] Even here, however, the sectarians affirmed that as with their ini-

tial election so now in the continued life of holiness, their responsiveness was

due to divine grace alone.

As with Old Testament Israel, so with Qumran, being a special divine

possession entailed certain ramifications for Qumran in relation to the outside

world. The call to separation from the non-elect reaches its zenith with these

desert sectarians.[328] As they individually hear God's call and are drawn to the

community, they leave behind their former lives and concerns.[329] The

Covenanters show little positive concern for the non-elect world, content for the

most part to leave it in darkness and await the day of judgment. Virtually no

interest is shown in missionary activity,[330] a state of affairs attributed by some

scholars to their strict predestinarianism. The community stands as a tiny

island, called, established and protected by God as His precious possession

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[327] So Rogers, 211: "In short, the Teacher of Righteousness represents, for the
Essenes, the pivotal point upon which the elect of Israel are distinguished from the non-elect of
Israel. According to one's response to his teachings, so is one judged to be elect or non-elect."

[328] Cf. above, pp. 75-76, for a fuller discussion of this theme.

[329] One of the tasks of the Guardian of the community was "...to ensure that no
friendly contact occurred between his congregation and the 'men of the Pit', i.e., everyone out-
side the sect" (Vermes, DSS, 10).

[330] But cf. Nötscher, 179, and Kosmala, 335f., for the view that one may find
occasional instances in the Dead Sea Scrolls of troubledness concerning those belonging to rival
groups, or even of proclamation of their way to outsiders. However, as Maier (211) points out,
contemporary reports about the Essenes show that they have impressed outsiders as being
extremely reclusive and perhaps even monkish, a fact which is nearly impossible to reconcile
with the notion of widespread missionary activity (cf. Pliny, Nat Hist, 5.15; Josephus, B.J.
2.120; Ant. 18.21; Philo, Hypothetica 3). He concludes (213): "Wir erhalten nach alledem das
Bild einer Gemeinschaft, die zwar eine starke Anziehungskraft auf Außenstehende ausübt, die
vielleicht auch geeignet erscheinende Einzelne beeinflußt, die sich aber im ganzen einer aktiven
und öffentlichen Mission versagt. Damit hebt sich Qumran scharf von den übrigen jüdischen
Gruppen ab, gleichviel ob es sich um Pharisäer, die Täuferbewegung, Hellenisten oder Juden-
christen handelt, den Entscheidungsruf an ganz Israel und sogar die Heiden herantragen und in
diesem Sinne Mission treiben."

which will survive the impending eschatological judgment on the rest of the world around it. In the interim period, this enclave of God's people is called to live in a way which manifests her dissimilarity from the wicked, a calling which leads to the second major role played by election in Qumran's theology.

4.2. Chosen for a Divine Vocation

In spite of the fact that they were called individually, the sectarians knew themselves called to a community as the people of God, and thus recognized in their election a joint divine vocation. This might be articulated in terms of service, but never as Dt-Isa's *Servant of the Lord* with a call to be a beacon of light to a darkened world. The sectarians would never have described themselves as 'a light to the nations.'[331] Rather, they visualized their vocation as a service to God which entailed at least three elements: 1) *the worship and praise of God*[332] -- Qumran developed a detailed and precise liturgy which they believed mirrored the angelic worship of the heavenly Temple.[333] The community's fastidious worship replaced the corrupt offerings of the Jerusalem Temple and thus helped to fulfill humankind's responsibility to glorify the Creator (1QH 1.29-34; 3.23; 6.11f.). Such non-Temple worship would continue until the sacrificial cult could be properly restored.[334] In addition, their nightly study and

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[331] For discussion of Qumran's understanding of service, cf. above, 91.

[332] According to Schürer, 581, "The principal aim of the Qumran sectaries was to lead a life of continuous worship in which the Sons of Light on earth joined their voices to those of the celestial choirs of the angels."

[333] Cf. 4Q400-407, which depict this angelic worship and imply the simultaneous observance of both heavenly and earthly liturgies. Among the themes of these angelic songs are descriptions of the heavenly sanctuary, a variety of the heavenly participants in the liturgy, and of the *Merkabah*, one of the most sacred of all visions in Jewish mystical thought.

[334] According to 1QM 2.5-6, this would take place in the seventh year of the eschatological war.

meditation upon the Torah served to augment their capacity to praise and glorify God. 2) *faithfulness and obedience* -- as their election was intimately connected with the Covenant and Torah, the sectarians understood themselves called to holiness. They had been set apart from wickedness, and were enjoined to follow the counsel of truth. By their purity of lifestyle judged according to the Teaching, they might find assurance of the divine work of election in their lives. 3) *execution of judgment in the final conflagration* -- a prominent theme in Qumran literature is the notion that the community would carry out the divinely-mandated task of defeating and destroying the non-elect at the end of the age. Members were called upon to prepare themselves for this eschatological responsibility, and the Scrolls reflect their confidence in the imminent judgment and eternal punishment of the sons of Darkness as well as in their own deliverance to eternal joy and glory. This leads us to the third and final major role played by the doctrine of election in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

4.3. Chosen to Receive the Fullness of Divine Blessing

Whereas in the Old Testament the blessing of God upon Israel was typically framed in terms of an earthly bonanza, for the Essenic community, caught up as they were with eschatological expectation,[335] it took on a much more other-worldly flavor. While this shift was not unique to the Qumran brotherhood among intertestamental Jewish groups, it was perhaps most evident in their theology. God had chosen them out of all the contemporary world, and He was preparing them for a life of eternal glory, joy, peace and light (1QS 2.4; 3.7; 4.8,23; 1QH 17.15; 18.15; 1QM 17.7; CD 3.20).[336] Somehow in the New

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[335] Qumran believed itself to be the final generation, "living on the very edge of the end of the world" (LaSor, 93; cf. 1QSa 1.1-2; CD 1.10-13).

[336] This is not to say that every notion of worldly or material blessings has disappeared from Qumran's thinking. The Land still occupies an important place in their hope of full restoration (cf., e.g., 1QS 8.4-10), and the future life is sometimes depicted in terms of an

Age, God would join together the community of the faithful with that of the heavenly host (cf. 1QS 11.5-8).[337] While a firm belief in the resurrection of the just cannot be substantiated beyond doubt, there is no question but that the sectarians believed in life immortal for the elect (1QS 4.7-8).[338] God would bring about the completion of His predestined plan for the creation by fully realizing the redemption of His elect at the end of time. They would stand before Him forever in worship and praise, and enjoy blessing beyond number and description.

5. Summary

Our investigation of the theme of election in the Dead Sea Scrolls began with a short presentation of working presuppositions regarding the history of the Qumran community and methodological techniques which would shape our approach. We argued that since the significance and purpose of the Covenanters' election was so central to the formation as well as the ongoing life and thought of their community it would have become highly standardized from the earliest stages. Nevertheless, passages would be considered carefully within their own immediate contexts.

In section II, we surveyed the wide range of election vocabulary and imagery in the Scrolls, focusing on five verbs and nine nouns with election

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eternal enjoyment of earthly benefits.

[337] Vermes, 45, summarizes: "The aim of a holy life lived within the Covenant was to penetrate the secrets of heaven in this world and to stand before God forever in the next."

[338] Likewise the wicked were destined to some sort of eternal torment or everlasting damnation, connected somehow with 'shameful extinction in the fire of the dark regions' (1QS 4.12-13).
    Rogers notes that in comparison with the Old Testament, Qumran shows much greater interest in the fate of both the elect and non-elect (vi): "In the scrolls, the fate of the elect and the non-elect is carefully articulated. The terrible fate of the non-elect is particularly graphic. The writers of the canonical work show little sustained interest in the fate of the non-elect" (cf. also 216).

Election in the Dead Sea Scrolls

import, as well as four images taken over from the Hebrew Scriptures but revised to highlight unique elements of Qumran election theology. The conclusions drawn here were then spelled out more fully in sections III and IV, where we detailed the highly individualistic understanding of election at Qumran, sought to show its development within the strict predestinarianism of Essene theology, considered its relation to free will, and investigated the various roles which it played in the community's self-understanding with reference to God and the outside world.

We concluded that Qumran saw itself as the true Israel of the last days, culled individually from the larger mass of ethnic Israel according to the predestined plan and sovereign pleasure of God. They were the remnant which He had spared and would save in the approaching time of eschatological judgment. Through its understanding of its own election, the community of the chosen shared a common identity, purpose and goal. In much the same way as with Old Testament Israel, God had elected the Covenanters to be His own possession, holy and separate from the world, reflecting in their salvation the glory of His mercy and redeeming power. Further, He had chosen them for a multifaceted vocation: proper worship and praise, faithfulness and obedience to the way of His righteousness, and military execution of His final judgment upon the nations on the imminent eschatological Day of Vengeance. Finally, God had chosen the members of the New Covenant to receive and enjoy the fullness of His eschatological blessing in the new age.

In contrast to its general Old Testament corporate usage, election for the Qumran community has become highly individualistic, and is tied inextricably to the sovereign predestining activity of God who decrees not only earthly but eternal destinies for all His creatures (double predestination).

In our next two chapters, we will consider how this worldview might provide a suitable backdrop against which to understand the apostle Paul's concept of election in Romans 9-11.

Chapter 4: Paul's Understanding of Election in Romans 9

1. Introduction

That the theme of election stands as a central pillar in the teaching of the Old Testament is beyond dispute. Likewise among the Jews of second Temple Judaism the concept of election plays an integral role in their self-understanding -- Israel as a nation is the chosen people of God, the ethnic entity which God has culled from the rest of the nations to receive His special love and blessing. The corporateness of this election is a central feature among Old Testament books as well as later Jewish documents. Rarely in second Temple Judaism does one find the concept of election being applied to individuals or to some Israelites in distinction to others. But when one investigates how election was understood by the minority Jewish sect of Qumran -- which stood opposed to the Jewish religious and political hierarchy in Jerusalem and even went so far as to label them apostates -- one quickly sees that this concept has undergone a radical revision. The Israelite nation as a whole is no longer the elect people. Now this designation applies only to the community of adherents in the wilderness who have separated themselves from the corrupt majority of Israel and have chosen to align themselves with the new covenant proclaimed by the Qumran leadership. The idea of election still has a corporate aspect to it at Qumran, but only in the sense that the group consists only of those whom God has individually selected to belong to His sifted and purified people.

From a sociological point of view, this radical reinterpretation of election by the Qumran community is not surprising. Such a perspective provides justification for the covenanters' self-understanding as the small but true Israel in the midst of the larger, apostate nation of Abraham's children as well as the Gentile nations. From a religious point of view, this new perspective on elec-

tion leads those at Qumran to consider themselves the apocalyptic remnant, the few faithful Israelites who will be saved from the wrath to come.

The nascent Christian community was influenced by many sociological conditions parallel to those of Qumran. Although in the beginning the early church did not seek to segregate itself from larger Israel, and indeed did not view Temple practices and leadership as corrupt and invalid, the young community in time became defined by the religious majority as a sect to be marginalized and perhaps even persecuted. Both the early church and the Qumran community were minority sects. And though the factors defining their respective relationships with the religious hierarchy in Jerusalem were certainly different, yet the antagonism experienced by both was much the same. Hence, it is not surprising that the early church as a persecuted minority should develop the same sort of self-understanding as did Qumran in terms of election.

Nowhere is this truer than in the case of the apostle Paul, who perhaps more than any other early Christian experienced the rejection and animosity of Jewish opponents across the Roman empire. And since it is in the ninth through eleventh chapters of Paul's letter to the Romans that he deals most thoroughly with the question of God's election of a people, and the place of both Israel and the church within that question, the remainder of our study will be concerned with this pivotal text.

1.1. Romans 9-11 in relation to Rom 1-8

A few interpreters have maintained that chapters 9-11 form an independent piece of writing with no crucial connection to the argument of chapters 1-8.[339] It is true that the literary style of this section "has a character all its

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[339] Dodd, 149 (cf. also 161), maintains that Romans could be read without any sense of gap if 9-11 were omitted, since the results of that section are not directly applied in what follows and since the way is clear after chapter 8 for "a full and explicit treatment of ethics" (which begins with 12.1). Most recently, Dodd's approach has been picked up by David E. Aune ("Romans as a Logos Protreptikos", 118, in *Paulus und das antike Judentum*), who suggests that

own,"[340] and that "apart from chapter 16, no part of Romans is as self-contained

as this."[341] But recent scholarship has demonstrated that there are substantial

links in language and logic between these two sections.[342] Some theologians

have even gone so far in the opposite direction as to suggest that Romans 1-8

form a kind of preamble to the main work found in 9-11.[343] Though this

extreme stance, in our opinion, is not justified, yet it can and should be said that

9-11 is not an optional extra in Paul's theological discourse, but rather a

mandatory argument needed to anchor the themes Paul has defended in 1-8.[344]

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the unit's inner coherence as well as the difficulty of accounting for its placement in the letter as a whole suggest it to be a digression or kind of excursus. Barth's slightly different view (*Shorter*, 110) sees 9-11 as a "second, comparatively independent part of the epistle" no longer concerned with explicating the theme of 1.16 but moving on to answer the question of what it means when the gospel as divine justification of the believer meets with disobedience. Kuß, 3.664-65, views 9-11 as an appendix to the main text of 1-8. (So also Schmithals, *Problem*, 210.) Likewise, J. A. T. Robinson holds that it "reads like an excursus and *could* be detached from the rest without affecting its argument and structure. 12:1 would follow perfectly well on 8:39" (108). R. Scroggs ("Paul as Rhetorician: Two Homilies in Romans 1-11" in *Jews, Greeks and Christians: Religious Cultures in Late Antiquity*, ed. R. Hamerton-Kelly; R. Scroggs, [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976] 271-298) maintains that together with chapters 1-4, 9-11 forms one sermon which Paul typically preached to Jewish audiences. Chapters 5-8, on the other hand, comprise a second sermon formulated by Paul for Gentile ears. Thus, while Scroggs sees close links between 9-11 and the opening chapters of Romans, he finds a literary and theological rift between 8.39 and 9.1.

[340] Dodd, 148.

[341] Käsemann, 253. Nevertheless, Käsemann goes on to say, 257, that the abrupt opening and change of tone of 9.1-5 compared with what precedes do not indicate an independent excursus. Black, 128, describes it as "a compact and continuous whole", distinctive in style and content from chs. 1-8 and yet also a natural, logical and necessary extension of Paul's main argument. Dunn, 518, refers to 9-11 as "a carefully composed and rounded unit", and yet also denies, 519, that Paul intended it as "an excursus or appendix." Cf. also Luz, 19-25; and Müller, 54f.

[342] Cf., e.g., P. Benoit, "Conclusion par mode de synthese" in *Die Israelfrage*, 217-18.

[343] Stendahl, 28: "The real center of gravity in Romans is found in chapters 9-11...;" 29: "To the central revelation of these chapters is then appended, so to say, a preface -- Romans 1-8...;" 85: "Romans 9-11 is not an appendix to chs. 1-8, but the climax of the letter." Cf. also Beker, 87; Campbell, "Freedom" 27f.; *idem*, "Place of Romans" 131; N. T. Wright, *Climax*, 234.

[344] Goppelt's analogy is apt (*Jesus, Paul and Judaism*, 153): "Romans 9-11 is not an appendix to the letter to the Romans. It actually is the keystone which closes the arch of Paul's theology and holds it all together."
Even Aune, 118, (see n339 above) recognizes that in 9-11 "...Paul is again picking up

Beginning with the thematic verse in 1.16 that the gospel is the power of salva-

tion for all who believe, *to the Jew first* and also to the Greek, the question of

Israel's lackluster response to the gospel lurks in the background of all Paul

says. Many of the themes which Paul introduces in chs. 1-8 are reintroduced in

9-11:[345] 2.25-29 defines Paul's understanding of the true Jew (cf. 9.6-13); 3.1-8

speaks of the privileges of the Jews and commences a discussion of God's faith-

fulness and Israel's problematic unfaithfulness, but does not offer a com-

prehensive solution to the issues raised (cf. 9.1-5, 14-23; 11.1-25); 4.9-25 takes

up the themes of God's promise to Abraham and the definition of the patriarch's

seed (cf. 9.6-13); chapter 8 employs key words which are echoed and perhaps

amplified in chapter 9: υἱοθεσία (8.15, 23; 9.4),[346] πρόθεσις (8.28; 9.11),

καλεῖν (8.28, 30; 9.7, 12, 24, 25), ἐκλεκτός/ἐκλογή (8.33; 9.11). Further-

more, there are strong logical as well as thematic connections between chapters

8 and 9.[347] In 8.17-39 Paul emphasizes the hope of eternal life to which

believers are called in Christ (verses 17-25), and stresses that this hope is sure

because God is its author (verses 28-36). Nothing, he says, will be able to

separate us from the love of God in Christ (verse 39). But now the sheer mag-

nitude of Israel's present unbelief looms as a determined challenge to Paul's tri-

umphant affirmations of chapter 8.[348] Can God's promises in Christ be trusted?

"Look what happened to Israel," an objector might contend. "Did not God

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the threads of an earlier argument which now requires further elaboration...." Also Räisänen, "Paul," 180; Badenas, 80-87.

[345] Cf. Noack ("Backwater," 158) for a substantial list.

[346] Cf. Byrne, 127-30.

[347] Cf. in particular J.-N. Aletti, "L'argumentation paulinienne en Rm 9," 53-55.

[348] Cranfield, 447: "And, if God's love for Israel...has ceased, what reliance can be placed on Paul's conviction that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ (v 38f)?"

choose her and make promises of salvation to her? But has she not rejected God's Messiah and since been cast off by God? If His election of Israel is transitory, if He has disregarded His binding promises to Israel, then how can He be trusted to accomplish what He has now promised believers in Christ?"[349] It is thus crucial to Paul's argument at the present point to deal decisively with the question of Israel's place in God's purposes, to face squarely the issue of God's faithfulness to His promises in light of Israel's intractability[350] before the gospel.[351] Paul is rightly concerned with Israel's fate in light of God's promise to Abraham, for it highlights the larger and personally relevant issue for the Roman Christians and indeed all who embrace the gospel: at the end of the day, can God be trusted? Israel's present condition strikes at the heart of his message, for it casts doubt on God's reliability to carry through the salvation of His people.[352] Hence with acute concern,[353] Paul turns in Romans 9-11 to the pressing question of Israel's election and through it to the larger question of the righteousness of God.[354]

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[349] That fact that Paul raised this question earlier in his letter at 3.3 (and refrained from giving a full answer at that point) strongly supports the view that chapters 9-11 are not a superfluous addendum but rather a necessary element to his overall argument.

[350] Though Israel's stubbornness with regard to the gospel is not specifically mentioned at this early point (and indeed doesn't explicitly arise until the latter part of chapter 10, though cf. 3.3-4), Paul can safely assume that his readers would be well aware of the poor receptivity accorded the gospel by the substantial majority of Jews throughout the Roman empire.

[351] Thus, it *may* be possible to say with Dodd, 148, that Romans 9-11 can be read satisfactorily without reference to the rest of the epistle, but the converse is certainly out of the question.

[352] Luz, 28: "Der Unglaube Israels stellt Gottes Glaubwürdigkeit selbst in Frage." Cf. also W. D. Davies ("Paul and the People of Israel," 131); M. Rese, ("Die Rettung der Juden nach Römer 11," 423); R. Badenas (*Christ the End of the Law*, 81-87); and J. C. Beker ("The Faithfulness of God," 14).

[353] Cranfield, 447: "...at this point the need for such a discussion has become urgent, since the very reliability of God's purpose as the ground of Christian hope is called in question by the exclusion of the majority of Jews."

[354] Piper, 5: "What is at stake *ultimately* in these chapters [9-11] is not the fate of Israel; that is penultimate. Ultimately *God's own* trustworthiness is at stake." Likewise, Hübner, 16: "Ein gescheiterter Gott ist aber kein Gott! Man muß in diesem Sinne zugespitzt

1.2. Election in Romans 9-11: The Problems

To grasp fully Paul's understanding of election in Romans 9-11, one must recognize that the concept is not limited to the ἐκλέγομαι word family, but has close links with other complex and often ambiguous terms. Thus, we must discover, for example, what Paul means by 'rejection', 'hardening', and 'casting off'. We must be sensitive to the various shades of meaning possible in the terms 'people of God' and 'Israel' -- in each particular instance, does 'people' for Paul mean specifically the remnant of Israel, or unbelieving Israel, or eschatological Israel, or perhaps the church of Gentile believers, or the totality of the elect, composed either of Jews or of Gentiles or both? Likewise for the term Israel,[355] does Paul intend it to refer historical Israel as a past entity, or to unbelieving Jews, or to the present remnant, or to Israel the eschatological people of God as an ethnic entity, or as the final company of all believers in Christ, both Jew and Gentile (cf. Gal 6.16 -- "the Israel of God")? Concerning election imagery, we must investigate Paul's use of the potter-clay and olive tree metaphors. Further, in each context where the idea of election appears (whether explicitly or implicitly) we must seek to determine both the object and the aim of election, i.e., the election of *whom* to *what*. Depending on the detailed conclusions reached on all these questions, one then faces to greater or lesser degree the issue of consistency between what Paul says of Israel and elec-

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formulieren, um die theologische Problematik, die Paulus hier eröffnet, nicht zu verharmlosen. Hier geht es nur sekundär um Israel, primär aber geht es um Gott." Cf. also E. E. Johnson, 146; N. T. Wright, *Climax*, 235.

[355] Cf., e.g., Hofius, "Evangelium," 301 n15, who argues that Paul uses 'Israel' in three different ways throughout Romans 9-11; also E. E. Johnson, 139-141, who speaks of "a single understanding of Israel in Romans 9-11" which is discussed in this section from three related perspectives (141).

tion on the one hand in Romans 9 and on the other in Romans 11.[356]

Throughout the history of interpretation of Romans 9, scholars have been forced to deal with the question of how Paul intended the concept of election to be understood in his overall argument supporting the assertion that "God's word has not failed" (9.6a). Two related questions take form as one seeks to grasp Paul's flow of thought: 1) Does the apostle's fundamental emphasis on God's sovereign work find its focus primarily in relation to people groups/nations, or in relation to individuals?; and 2) Is Paul speaking simply and specifically of election of those individuals or people groups to historical tasks and privileges, or to divergent eternal destinies? The various answers to these questions generally fall into one of two basic groupings: either Paul thinks of God as electing people groups to tasks or privileges within history without regard to eternal realities; or he sees God's sovereign activity defined by the principle that God elects individuals to eternal destinies. Apart from some fine tuning by particular commentators, these are the two major and rival views which come to the fore time and again as scholars work through Romans 9.1-29. Our first task, then, will be to consider this vital, opening section of Romans 9-11 with a view to discovering the scope and purpose of the concept of election as Paul employs it here. In the next chapter, we will consider the scope and purpose of election as found in Romans 11. In the midst of the latter

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[356] Heikki Räisänen ("Paul, God and Israel," 192), for example, argues that there are considerable internal contradictions in 9-11. He maintains that on the crucial question of the treatment of Israel, Paul gives two opposing responses: in 9.6-29 empirical Israel is not elected, but rather hardened and damned in advance to reprobation; in 11.11-32 empirical Israel (or most of it) is to be saved because of God's loyalty to His promises and to the election of the people.

Bent Noack ("Backwater," 165-66) also sees inconsistencies in 9-11 which he attributes to Paul's struggles with issues for which he has no final solution until the answer is revealed to him "at the very moment of his dictating the second part of ch. xi, vv. 13-36."

Cf. also H. W. Schmidt (*Römer*, 185); U. Wilckens (*Römer*, 263); H. Hübner (*Gottes Ich und Israel*, 122); F. Watson (*Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 170); W. Schmithals (*Römerbrief*, 408-409).

investigation we will wrestle with the question of possible inconsistency in Paul's argumentation between Romans 9 and 11.

2. Election in Romans 9.1-29

This first phase in Paul's overall argument presents the besetting problem of Israel's condition (verses 1-5), followed by Paul's assertion of God's faithfulness in spite of appearances (verse 6a), and finally his initial justification for that assertion in three subsections: 6b-13, 14-23, 24-29. Since this section comprises a very tightly knit defense, we shall consider each unit in turn. The apostle's overall argument concerning the faithfulness of God in the face of Israel's widespread apostasy hinges, as we shall see, on his distinctive understanding of divine election.

2.1. Romans 9.1-5

As we noted in our introductory comments, Paul's pressing concern as he concludes Romans 8 is the issue of the faithfulness of God in relation to His promises toward contemporary, unbelieving Israel. This realization precludes the now-dated exegetical approach to Romans 9 as a dogmatic treatise on predestination, election and reprobation. However, we do not thereby deny the fact that Paul used these concepts to support his argument concerning Israel's destiny and God's righteousness in His dealings with her. Our present desire is to investigate Paul's understanding of God's electing purpose (9.11) in chapter 9 as it relates to his defense of divine righteousness in God's dealings with Israel.

Understanding Romans 9.1-5 is crucial for correctly defining the scope of the issue Paul addresses in the rest of 9-11. The apostle affirms something in these verses which raises an unspoken question concerning God's faithfulness to His word. He immediately recognizes and responds to that question in 9.6a: *"But it is not as though the word of God has failed."* The vast majority of

scholars agree that 9.6a comprises the key verse of 9-11 -- so that the remainder

of these three chapters is dedicated to supporting and explicating this denial.

Hence, it is necessary that we take time to understand as precisely as possible

exactly what Paul said which appeared to him to put God's reliability into ques-

tion.

After his exhilarating conclusion to chapter 8, Paul changes his tone

quite dramatically upon entering this new section of the epistle.[357] The cadence

of his phrasing slows, and the repetition of oath-like statements ("I speak the

truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bears me witness")[358] lends a

solemn, sober air to what follows. Paul's impassioned declarations[359] in verse 1

of his own intense anguish over the Jews highlights the seriousness with which

he approaches the situation of Jewish unbelief and serves to counter any possible

charge (or past accusation) that as apostle to the Gentiles Paul has become

indifferent or even antagonistic to his kinsmen.[360]

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[357] As F. W. Maier (*Israel in der Heilsgeschichte nach Römer 9-11*, 6) observes: "Es
ist, als ob der Apostel auf einmal aus seligen Himmelshöhen in den finstersten, trostlosesten
Abgrund stürzte."

[358] Cf. Maurer, *TDNT*, 7:916; Rese, "Israel," 208, 214; Dunn, 522-23; Cranford, 29.

[359] 'Vehemence' is an appropriate word to use here in connection with Paul's defense
of his honesty (cf. Barrett, 176: "a vehement assertion of truthfulness"; Black, 128: "vehemence
of assertion"; Dunn, 523: "some vehemence"). There is certainly a sense of passion, but
nothing of anger in what he says. Though in 2 Cor 11.31 and Gal 1.20 οὐ ψεύδομαι might
imply some anger in light of the way Paul feels he has been treated by those respective con-
gregations, no such situation attaches to the church at Rome nor does Paul give any indication in
the previous context that he is presently feeling a challenge to his authority or integrity. Hence
οὐ ψεύδομαι here should be understood as the balancing counterpart to the first clause of a
solemn oath ("I am speaking the truth in Christ") which is then supported by a further affirma-
tion, both seeking to underline the depth and veracity of his feelings concerning his natural kins-
men.

[360] Cf. SH, 227; Barrett, 176; Black, 128- 9; Räisänen, "Analyse," 2895. Dunn, 522:
"Paul wants his audience to be in no doubt of the depth of his identity with and concern for his
own people."
     Cranfield argues (453-4) that the introduction of verse 2 (concerning Paul's deep sor-
row and anguish) with such an "extraordinary degree of emphasis and solemnity" demands some
explanation. To his mind, a concern on Paul's part to rebut any charge of indifference and to
defend his loyalty to the nation of Israel scarcely justifies such an introduction. Instead, he finds
it more likely that Paul, in light of what will unfold in 9-11, "...recognized that the very
integrity and authenticity of his apostleship to the Gentiles would be called into question, were

With striking language in verse 2,[361] Paul now reveals the intense inner pain he is experiencing. Μεγάλη (λύπη) and ἀδιάλειπτος (ὀδύνη) heighten the emotional force of Paul's declaration, though as yet we have no clue regarding the cause of this anguish.[362] For that we must turn to verse 3. As Morris notes, the prefatory γάρ here introduces not the *reason* for Paul's grief but rather an explanation of its content.[363] More specifically, it declares both the object of his grief and the lengths to which Paul would go to rectify the situation (if he

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he able to give up his fellow-Israelites, were he not to suffer grief so long as they continued in unbelief; and that he regarded it as of vital importance that the Christians to whom he was writing ...should know of this grief of his, because for them too such a grief was the only attitude with regard to the Jews' continuing unbelief that would be consistent with faith." (Cf. also Barth, *Shorter*, 113.) But although it might be true that Paul recognized his own apostleship would be in jeopardy were he not to continue to suffer grief over Israel's abiding unbelief (Cranfield does not demonstrate how this must be the case), he nowhere here relates his feelings to his faith, and he certainly gives no hints that his readers should share with him these feelings as the only ones "consistent with faith". N. T. Wright ("Romans and the Theology of Paul," 187-88; 205-7) sees Paul's missionary strategy as the underlying factor which leads him to want his readers to share these feelings: Paul is eager for the Roman church to serve as his new base for missionary activity which will increasingly stir Israel to jealousy and hence speed their return to God. However, though this is a plausible conjecture, Paul offers no hints here concerning his desires over his readers' attitudes.

Much more likely, then, is the former explanation that Paul takes great pains to refute charges launched his way by various Jewish, Jewish-Christian and perhaps even Gentile groups that he harbors anti-Jewish sentiments. Indeed he continues to carry a deep love in his heart for his kinsmen and the pressing desire that they may be saved.

[361] Cf. also verse 3, where αὐτὸς ἐγώ serves to heighten Paul's personal, emotional involvement.

[362] SH, 227: "St. Paul does not mention directly the cause of his grief, but leaves it to be inferred from the next verse."

Gaston, 418, regards Paul's lack of specificity here as an argument against understanding him to imply that Israel has forfeited her salvation through unbelief. Rather, Paul grieves because Israel has failed to serve as 'a light to the nations' and now opposes his own mission to the Gentiles. But, as Räisänen ("Paul," 198 n17) rightly objects: "...can we seriously assume that Paul wished to make himself anathema for the sake of his kinsmen merely because they failed to undertake gentile mission and to recognize Paul's mission to the Gentiles?"

[363] Morris, 347. *Pace* SH, 228, who feel γάρ serves to introduce further proof of Paul's sincerity. Since Paul has already underlined his sincerity quite emphatically in verse 1, but has not yet revealed the content of his abiding anguish, it is more likely that in verse 3 Paul intends his readers to understand the content of his grief by means of the action he would take on behalf of those he loves so deeply. Cf. Schlier, 284-86; Siegert, 120-21.

could) and so allay his grief.[364] The apostle claims he could wish to be

accursed, cut off from Christ for the sake of Israel. What concerns us here is

not Paul's understanding of the possibility or impossibility of this wish being

fulfilled,[365] but rather what the wish itself implies about Paul's understanding of

the situation of his kinsmen with respect to God. Although not directly stated,

the plight of Israel forms the central thought of verses 1-3, not Paul's personal,

emotional reaction to this plight.[366] In verse 3, Paul contemplates a transaction

with God involving an exchange of status between him and the majority of

Israel. He could wish to be ἀνάθεμα, cut off from Christ for the sake of the

Jews. There can be little doubt what Paul here claims: were it possible (though

cf. 8.35, 39), he would forfeit his own redemption before God (become

ἀνάθεμα)[367] if in return the mass of unbelieving Israel obtained salvation in

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[364] Cranford, 29, notes: "...Paul is describing a series of emotions which should cause him to reject the position he is about to express, were it not incontrovertible."

[365] For a detailed discussion of this problem, cf. Cranfield, 454-7.

[366] It is interesting to note how many commentators miss this point, as evidenced by the titles they give to 9.1-5 as a section. SH: The Apostle's Sorrow Over Israel's Unbelief"; Munck: "Lament over Israel"; Hendriksen: "Paul's Sorrow"; Käsemann: "The Apostle's Lament"; Kuss: "Klage des Apostles um sein Volk..."; Stuhlmacher: "Lament for Israel." More correctly, Barrett: "The Unbelief of Israel"; Black: "Israel's Unbelief"; Murray: "The Unbelief of Israel" (though Murray (9) somewhat inconsistently argues subsequently that "...it is to the apostle's grief that the reservation of verse 6 is to be attached). Best of all, Cranfield: "The Subject of This Main Division of the Epistle Is Introduced"; and Morris: "The Tragedy of Israel". Dunn attempts to incorporate both in his title: "What Then of Israel? Paul's Concern for His Kinspeople", but this lacks sufficient focus on the plight of Israel which motivates Paul to defend God's faithfulness.

[367] ᾿Ανάθεμα/ἀνάθημα in its biblical usage originally means "something devoted to God". Very quickly however it takes on the more specialized meaning of being handed over to God for destruction and hence accursed. In the LXX, it serves as the major Greek equivalent for חֵרֶם, though חֵרֶם can also be represented by a further family of words meaning "destroy, slay, annihilate", especially ἐξολετρεύειν, ἀπολλύειν and ἀπώλεια (cf. Lohfink, חרם, TDOT 5:172). For Paul, ἀνάθεμα always carries this sense of something brought under the eschatological curse of God (cf. 1 Cor 12.2; 16.22; Gal 1.8, 9). His use of ἀπώλεια in 9.22 with reference to the vessels of wrath would seem to confirm the understanding that ἀνάθεμα in 9.3 points to something or someone "...delivered over to the divine wrath, devoted to destruction, accursed" (Cranfield, 457), and that this accursedness refers not merely to ecclesiastical excommunication (contra Käsemann, 258), but rather to final judgment. Behm (TDNT 1:354-5) writes, "We can hardly think of an act of Church discipline, since the apostle uses the phrase ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 9.3) and also considers that an angel from heaven (Gal 1.8) or even Jesus Himself (1 Cor 12.3) might be accursed." Cf. also Cranford (30-31), who argues that "In terms

Christic. [368] The necessary premise to this argument entails that Paul believed

Israel in its present unbelieving state to be ἀνάθεμα before God.[369] Ἀπὸ τοῦ

Χριστοῦ[370] highlights this eschatological condition by emphasizing that to be

ἀνάθεμα is to be cut off from Christ, who for Paul is the only means to

redemption. Paul's deep sorrow and unceasing anguish stems from the situation

of condemnation under which the majority of Israel stands.[371]

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of boundaries, ἀνάθεμα ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ amounts to a movement out of covenant membership into a status of condemnation and wrath...." He further points out (30 n13) that ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ in verse 3 is contrasted "with Paul's position ἐν Χριστῷ in 9.1, a state elsewhere connected with eternal life (6.23) and exemption from wrath (8.1)."

[368] Behm, *TDNT* 1:355: "That he would willingly see himself separated from Christ and given up to divine judgment ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα (R. 9:3) is a supreme expression of the readiness of Paul for redemptive self-sacrifice for the people which excludes itself from the divine revelation of salvation (Ex. 32:32)." Cf. also Munck, *Paul*, 306; Lubking, 59; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 544.

[369] Dunn's assertion (524-5), "Whether Paul intended his readers to understand that *Israel* was ἀνάθεμα is more than open to question...," is surprising. If Paul did not intend this, then he was consciously willing to offer the supreme self-sacrifice (not just physical death, but condemnation, i.e., eternal separation from Christ) for the sake of achieving something of less than eternal significance. Furthermore, if in Paul's mind Israel were not accursed before God, why would he be in such agony over her? If her salvation is not in jeopardy, why does Paul show such great concern over her situation? The apostle's willingness to become ἀνάθεμα to God, to experience what he has just said no Christian could experience (8.35-39), makes sense only if he believes his kinsmen are "...in a plight as serious as the one he is willing to enter for their sake" (Piper, 29), themselves separated from Christ and hence accursed. It is precisely this reality, the gravity of Israel's precarious position outside of Christ, which leads to the question of whether God's word of promise has failed. Any lesser state of affairs could not call forth the objection implied in verse 6a. Räisänen ("Römer 9-11," 2896) is therefore correct when he says: "Er [Paul] spricht den irrealen Wunsch aus, selbst ein 'Verfluchter' (ἀνάθεμα) und fern von Christus zum Besten seiner Verwandten zu sein. Dies setzt voraus, daß die Verwandten sich eben in jener Lage befinden, in die an ihrer Stelle einzutreten Paulus sich bereit erklärt. Die Israeliten sind also ἀνάθεμα." Cf. also Hübner, 16, who argues that unless contemporary Israel has lost her salvation, Paul's wish becomes "unmotiviert und sinnlos".

[370] It has been suggested that ἀπό in verse 3 might have an instrumental sense, i.e., "accursed *by* Christ, but in light of the similar phrasing in 8.35, 39 (ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Χριστοῦ/τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ...), ἀπό here should be understood in the sense of separation. Piper, 29, points out further that "ἀνάθεμα is not a verbal noun and so does not explicitly contain an action which must be performed by anyone."

[371] It is incorrect to say that Paul agonizes because "...if Israel does not finally embrace the Christ, then *his own* gospel is flawed at its heart..." (Dunn, 532). Paul has shown no personal doubts as to the veracity of his gospel, and his triumphant claim in verse 6a (that the word of God has not failed) makes clear that he has no inner disquietude over God's faithfulness to His promises throughout salvation history. Paul is not "working through his feelings" over what Israel's predicament might mean for his gospel (as though this were some new challenge he had never considered before [Dunn (520) readily acknowledges concerning chapters 9-11 that

After this indirect yet nonetheless candid declaration of Israel's predicament, Paul goes on in 9.4-5 to list an impressive series of privileges[372] which he ascribes to "his kinsmen according to the flesh". It is precisely this juxtaposition of Israel's present accursedness together with her tremendous and abiding "spiritual" privileges (including ἡ υἱοθεσία[373] and αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι [verse 4], and her status as the race through whom God brought the Christ into the world [verse 5]) which raises the controversial problem discussed in verses 6ff. -- if contemporary Israel is outside the sphere of salvation, even though she is the recipient of such tremendous gifts from God, does this not place God's faithfulness to His purposes (expressed in past promises to the patriarchs, in her divinely-instituted worship, in the giving of the Law, in past displays of glory, etc.) in question? And if God has not kept His word toward Israel, how can the gospel, which Paul sees as the fulfillment of God's purposes in the OT, be good news to anyone? And how can God Himself be considered righteous? To this issue Paul turns his attention in 9.6ff.

2.1.1. *Summary*

In this introductory section of 9.1-5, Paul sets both the scope and agenda of his argument for the next three chapters. His focus in chapter 8 on the

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"...Paul had probably rehearsed the arguments in so many discussions and expositions that it was more a matter of shaping familiar material than of *de novo* composition;" and (532) "[Paul is]...a man so sure of his gospel that he is willing to stake everything, his own life included, on it...."]), but rather voicing an ongoing heartache (realized through numerous painful encounters) that many of his kinsmen were condemned in their unbelief. Thus even though Paul can be confident that God's word has not failed, he nevertheless continues to carry unceasing (ἀδιάλειπτος) anguish in his heart over his fellow countrymen who have not embraced Christ (cf. Epp, 81).

[372] Or, perhaps better, "gifts" by which God has honored Israel; cf. Oesterreicher, 319.

[373] For a discussion of the elective significance of Israel's adoption/sonship before God, cf. 35-37 above.

Christian hope of eternal life and its basis in God's faithfulness (8.20, 28f.,

31ff.) has compelled him to consider the question of the salvation of Israel,

which largely had rejected the Messiah. So now in chapter 9 Paul acknowl-

edges both the desperate plight of Israel and his intense anguish over her present

accursedness. By the extent to which he claims he would suffer on her behalf

the apostle shows his understanding of the extent of her predicament. She is

ἀνάθεμα, cut off from Christ and damned in her unbelief -- this is an astonish-

ing reality, and all the more shocking in light of the phenomenal privileges

which God has granted Israel in the past and which still abide for her in the pre-

sent. The scope of Paul's argument thus extends to the question of ultimate,

eternal salvation,[374] and his agenda concerns itself with Israel's place in God's

salvific plans and the ultimate issue of God's trustworthiness.

2.2. Romans 9.6-13

If we are correct that Paul's great sorrow and unceasing anguish

expressed in 9:2,3 stem from his awareness of the eschatological condemnation

awaiting the majority of his kinsmen, then in this next section Paul must attempt

to answer how God can be said to remain faithful to his promises to Israel

which embrace His ultimate purpose of salvation.[375]

Paul deals with this problem in verse 6b by juggling[376] the key term

'Israel' and using it in two distinct, though related ways: "All those from Israel,

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[374] Munck, 30, recognizes this clearly: "In the case of Moses [in Ex 32.32f.] and Paul it is a matter of salvation and damnation." Further, a brief look ahead to the conclusion Paul reaches in chapter 11 confirms this scope of his argument introduced in 9.1-5. In 11.26f. Paul, beyond doubt, is speaking of the final salvation of Israel.

[375] Räisänen, "Römer 9-11," 2897: "Es ist der ἀνάθεμα-Zustand Israels -- also nicht etwa die vermeintliche Anstößigkeit der göttlichen Annahme auch von Heiden --, der die Frage nach der Treue Gottes hervorruft."

[376] Hübner, 17. Barrett, 180, speaks of "an analysis of the meaning of Israel." According to N. T. Wright (Climax, 238), Paul recognizes that "there is already a 'double "Israel"'."

these are not Israel."[377] That is, Israel defined genealogically is not identical

with Israel for whom God's promises presently are fulfilled. This distinction

between Israel as a physical entity and "true" Israel has been expressed in vari-

ous ways by commentators,[378] perhaps most helpfully by Cranfield (473-4): "the

Israel within Israel", or "selective, special Israel" in the midst of "com-

prehensive" Israel. True Israel is not a mechanistic unit determined completely

by blood lines, but rather a subset of that group chosen and called through the

divine promise.[379] Cranfield correctly notes that 9.6b makes a distinction

between different levels or forms of election,[380] but he errs in further affirming

that Paul makes no distinction between election and non-election regarding the

members of Israel.[381] It is precisely Paul's point that some Israelites (many in

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[377] Piper, 47-8, argues persuasively for this particular rendering of 9.6b in the follow-
ing way: the demonstrative pronoun οὗτοι in the second clause refers to a definite group of
people, and οὐ πάντες by nature must be seen as indefinite; Rom 7.15 provides a close parallel
in grammatical structure, and there οὐ must modify the second clause.

[378] Cf. Hübner, 18 n19, for a fairly comprehensive list; also Byrne, 131; Barclay, 249;
Guerra, 229; Cranford, 33. The vast majority of commentators agree that "true Israel"
represents a subset of ethnic Israel -- those Jews who believe in Christ, not "all Christians" (so,
e.g., Fitzmyer [Romans, 559-60], for whom "true Israel" is "the Israel of faith.) Cf. B.
Longenecker, 96-7 for a solid discussion of this.

[379] E. E. Johnson's contention (148 n122) that 9.6b "should not be read to exclude
unbelieving Jews from the start" makes little sense in light of the issue Paul has already framed
in 9.1-6a. If 9.6b is intended to introduce "standard Jewish claims about divine election," it
fails miserably to provide an answer for the pressing issue of Jewish unbelief. Additionally, the
first instance of the term 'Israel' is then forced to include the descendants of Ishmael and Esau, a
concept difficult to imagine any first century Jew acceding to. Longenecker, by contrast, cor-
rectly notes (96): "As early as 9.6...Paul has set up a distinction within ethnic Israel between
those of faith and those of unbelief."

[380] Paul would certainly affirm that national Israel was elected to its privileged position
in history as the people bearing God's revelation to the world, even though not as such neces-
sarily elected to salvation.

[381] Cranfield, 471ff. He flatly states, 473: "The point Paul is making is that not all
who are included in the comprehensive Israel are included also in the selective, special Israel.
But this does not mean what it has so often been taken to mean -- that only part of the Jewish
people is the elect people of God." The charge of anti-semitism, which Cranfield is so eager to
defend Paul against, certainly could not be lodged against the apostle in light of his agony of
heart declared in 9.2,3.
    On 474, Cranfield admits something which comes suspiciously close to affirming an
"election within election": "Paul's meaning is rather that within the elect people itself there has

Paul's day) who are part of the elect people in the former sense (of privileged

Israel) are not part of the elect people in the latter sense (of redeemed Israel).[382]

Paul is concerned in verses 7-13 to defend his assertion that these two

elections are not coextensive,[383] and indeed to show that the majority of his

kinsmen are not participating in this most important soteriological election.[384]

To do that he appeals to God's paradigmatic activity with the patriarchs,

highlighting the election of Isaac and Jacob over against the non-election of their

siblings. Isaac, as the child of promise singled out by God (cf. Jub. 16.17),

becomes the paragon of the "children of promise", i.e., those chosen for salva-

tion (verses 7-9). Further, within the lineage of Isaac, God chooses between the

twins Jacob and Esau before their birth, ignoring the right of primogeniture[385]

and emphasizing (in Paul's eyes) that divine election depends on no human

status, merit or activity but instead solely on His sovereign electing purposes

(verses 10-13).

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been going on throughout its history a divine operation of distinguishing and separating, whereby 'the Church hidden in Israel' has been differentiated from the rest of the chosen nation."

[382] Cf. Cranford, 36-37. Murray, II:18, insightfully paraphrases 9.6b: "'They are not all elect, who are of elect Israel.'" M. Barth (*People of God*, 35) puts it provocatively: "To those chosen by God there belong people whom we would call reprobate." Fitzmyer (*Romans*, 558) notes that Paul "distinguishes different kinds of divine election, as he tries to explain what election really means."

[383] Cranford, 35: "The question of who constitutes the people of God, and the criteria by which they are marked out, is central to Paul's concern and the general context of Romans 9-11."

[384] Paul does affirm in 11.26 that all Israel will be saved, but one must not import that text into the apostle's argument at this point and thereby slacken the tension which Paul has purposefully sustained here. We propose to consider 11.25ff. in its proper context at the end of our deliberations.

[385] This same right of the firstborn was ignored in the case of Isaac and Ishmael as well.

Verses 10-13 are of particular concern to our investigation. It is here

more than anywhere else in chapter 9 that the question of predestination of indi-

viduals or people groups to eternal or historical destinies comes to the fore.

Verse 11, though syntactically a parenthetical aside, actually forms the main

thought of this section. Here the substantive ἐκλογή occurs for the first time in

Romans (though the subject has been considered previously in chapter 8) and is

tied directly through the Jacob/Esau story to divine predestination.[386] 11c (ἵνα

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[386] A few exegetes have sought to argue that Paul did not here intend to convey a
divine predestination "as commonly understood" (Munck, 42; cf. SH, 245; Brunner, 85; Leen-
hardt, 251). Munck writes concerning 9.10-13: "God's choice of a founder for his people is
made in the midst of history and not before creation. In the example of Isaac's sons, it is in fact
emphasized that the word of promise was spoken before the two children were born in order that
God's selective purpose might stand, based not upon deeds but upon him who called. This elec-
tion does not presuppose predestination as commonly understood, a choice by God prior to crea-
tion. If that were the case, the time at which knowledge of the choice was made known would
be of no significance. The announcement of the choice must be made immediately after the
decision; God's choice is determined in the midst of history." The essence of Munck's position
is that if God's choice between Jacob and Esau was made prior to creation, then the time at
which God made that choice known in history would be irrelevant. But since Paul does attach
significance to this announcement, he must believe God's choice to have occurred immediately
prior to the announcement and not before creation.

Munck's error lies in attaching the significance (for Paul) of the timing of the
announcement (that God would choose Jacob over Esau) to the point at which the choice was
made (in his mind this point must be immediately prior to the announcement rather than before
creation). In fact, the significance for Paul lay in the freedom of God to choose without regard
to human merit or distinctives, for the presumption Paul argues against is that God chose Jacob
over Esau because he foresaw something preferable in Jacob's future life to that of Esau. In this
argument, Paul is not interested in discussing *precisely* when God's choice between the twins
was made -- it is sufficient that it occurred prior to their birth, with the proviso that God's call
was in no way based on any extant or foreknown distinctives in the twins but depended com-
pletely on God's sovereign electing freedom. And although Paul does not here explicitly argue
for a predestination from "God's eternal counsel", he certainly does not preclude that
understanding by what he says.

Munck's declaration that "God's choice is determined in the midst of history" leads him
to a deeper problem. For he admits that God's election of Jacob over Esau occurred before their
birth and was independent of any consideration of their future characters or deeds. But by link-
ing God's decision of election with the continuing flux of history, Munck is forced to the posi-
tion that God's election of Jacob and rejection of Esau, while free in regard to the twins' "will-
ing and running", must nevertheless have been determined by the actions of some other individ-
ual(s) or group(s) which brought history into the peculiar configuration and thereby elicited
from God this particular response. But such a position severely clashes with Paul's intention in
9.6-23 to highlight the freedom of the sovereign God to act toward His creation apart from any
external constraints. As Piper concludes, 38: "Surely Paul does not intend to say that God's
electing purpose will remain so long as God's choices are based not on the works of the persons
chosen but on the works (the willing and running) of their predecessors in human history! For
the opposite of 'not from works' (Rom 9.12a) is not 'but from the ebb and flow of historical cir-
cumstance' (which is nothing but the complex sum of men's willing and running); but rather the
opposite...is 'but from the one who calls,' namely God alone."

ἡ κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένῃ) serves as the positive restatement of

verse 6a (οὐχ οἷον δὲ ὅτι ἐκπέπτωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ),[387] reemphasizing that

God's word did not fail in His dealings with the patriarchs, and establishing the

principle that God's purpose in carrying out His promises is an elect-

ing/selective purpose (note the purposive ἵνα and present subjunctive μένῃ).

Thus Paul can maintain that even in his present day, despite the anathematiza-

tion of many of his fellow Jews, God's electing purpose is being carried out as

it always has throughout Israel's history.

The two major lines of interpretation of verses 6b-13 (which we will

refer to as "collectivist" and "individualist" respectively) differ mainly in their

understanding of the scope of God's electing purpose toward Israel. Both agree

that Paul establishes the principle that God is free to choose whom He pleases

apart from any external considerations, and (for the most part) that there is a

real element of predestination involved in God's unfolding purpose.[388] They

part company on the questions of whom Paul has in mind and to what end they

are elected.

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[387] Οὐχ οἷον δὲ ὅτι ἐκπέπτωκεν parallels μένῃ. God's word has not fallen; indeed
God's purpose remains firm, as evidenced by the patriarchal history of the Jews. The further
parallel between λόγος and πρόθεσις helps us understand more clearly what Paul believes has
not fallen (v 6). It is not simply God's specific promise(s) to Israel (so Käsemann, 262, who
appeals to the phrase τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ in 3.2; cf. also Hübner, 16; Dunn, 539; Räisänen, 2897
n32, argues further that the use of λόγος in verse 9 in connection with ἐπαγγελία confirms
this). Black (130) is closer to the point in acknowledging not only the above sense but further
the fact that "...'word' here has a wider reference, meaning the whole plan and intention of God
(similarly SH, 240: "the declared purpose of God"; Cranfield, 473; Piper, 33). The promises of
God reflect His deeper purposes toward Israel, purposes which are revealed through the electing
activity of God.

[388] As noted above (n386), the element of predestination surfaces most clearly in verses
11-12. God's intention (Cf. E. Stauffer, *TDNT*, 3:324-34) to bring about his plan concerning
Jacob and Esau is clearly revealed to Rebecca before the twins are born and shown by Paul to be
independent of any temporal circumstances. Thus the fates of Jacob and Esau (whether seen as
limited to a role within history or extending to eternal salvation) are rightly termed "pre-
destined", determined in advance of their historical outworking.

2.2.1 *The Collectivist Thesis*

The collectivist interpretation argues that in 9.6b-13 Paul demonstrates clearly[389] that God elects nations or people groups to particular historical tasks or roles. The compelling evidence for this position is found in the OT verses Paul cites and their own immediate contexts.[390] There are two sets of quotations, the first dealing with Isaac (and Ishmael, by implication): Gen 21.12 = Rom 9.7b, Gen 18.10,14 = Rom 9.9; and the second dealing with Jacob and Esau: Gen 25.23 = Rom 9.12, Mal 1.2 = Rom 9.13. In the first set, Paul uses Gen 21.12 to undercut (7b is introduced with ἀλλά) the popular argument among some Jews that physical descent from Abraham ensures God's covenantal faithfulness. Ἐν Ἰσαάκ κληθήσεταί σοι σπέρμα demonstrates that even in the first generation after the covenantal promises were given, participation in their benefits demanded more than simple physical descent from Abraham -- it required being "children of promise" in distinction to just being "children of flesh", as Paul clarifies (τοῦτ' ἔστιν) in verse 8. Isaac is seen here not just as

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[389] So SH, 245: "The absolute election of Jacob, -- the 'loving' of Jacob and the 'hating' of Esau, -- has reference simply to the election of one to higher privileges as head of the chosen race, than the other. It has nothing to do with their eternal salvation." Also Munck, *Christ*, 42: "Romans 9.6-13 is therefore speaking neither of individuals and their selection for salvation, nor of the spiritual Israel, the Christian church. It speaks rather of the patriarchs who without exception became founders of peoples. God selected one son to carry on the chosen stock, but sent the other son away to become the founder of an alien people outside the promised land." James P. Martin, 307 n11: "In Rom. 9-11 Paul is thinking of collectivities, of historical groups, not of individuals. Jacob and Esau are peoples who have been assigned different functions in world history." Leenhardt, 250: "Paul thinks in terms of collectives." Cranfield, 479: "What is here in question is not eschatological salvation and damnation, but the historical functions of those concerned and their relations to the development of salvation history." Morris in his recent commentary also follows this line (356). Cf. also Oesterreicher, 320; Badenas, 85; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 563.

[390] It is further argued by some scholars embracing this position that the question of free will and determinism, or predestination of individuals to eternal destinies, is a modern issue imported particularly by Western scholars into Paul's text (cf., e.g., Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 70), and that such questions would have been foreign to the Hebrew mindset of the first century A.D.. As we have already seen, however, in our study of election at Qumran, such is not the case.

the son of promise (emphasized by appeal to Gen 18.10, 14), but also as the type of all those whom God elects. God is never bound by human customs or distinctives (the right of primogeniture, in this case) to allocate the covenantal inheritance to any of Abraham's descendants. The collectivist interpretation typically emphasizes here that this covenantal inheritance to which Isaac is chosen and from which Ishmael is rejected does not involve individual, eschatological salvation, but rather only the historically-limited promises of many descendants, of the land of Canaan, and of God's presence ("I will be your God"; cf. Gen 17.2-8).[391]

To this point in Paul's argument many Jews would feel comfortable enough. "Certainly," they might say, "God's chosen lineage is through Isaac, not Ishmael. We know the Ishmaelites are not beneficiaries of God's covenant. Perhaps Ishmael and his descendants were rejected because his life resulted from the union of Abraham and Hagar the Egyptian slave-girl.[392] Isaac, on the other hand, was born through the better union of Abraham and Sarah. No doubt this is why he was chosen. And as we are his legitimate descendants, free from the inadequacies of Ishmael, so we too must be beneficiaries of the covenant." In

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[391] It has been pointed out that Ishmael's exclusion from the covenant lineage does not necessitate the view that he was cut off from God's mercy, particularly in light of what the book of Genesis says elsewhere about him. Cranfield, 475: "But it is to be carefully noted that the Genesis narrative indicates explicitly God's care for Ishmael (cf. Gen 21.13, 17-21; also 16.10-14; 17.20). So we must not read into Paul's argument any suggestion that Ishmael, because he is not chosen to play a positive part in the accomplishment of God's special purpose, is therefore excluded from the embrace of God's mercy." In and of itself, this is true. However, we must also acknowledge that God's temporal care for an individual does not in and of itself reflect His decisions in the arena of eternal salvation (as Jesus says in Mt 5.45, God makes the sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust; i.e., His general care and provisions are lavished abundantly and without moral distinction). We must ask further what Paul's argument in its own context may legitimately imply about Ishmael (and Esau and Pharaoh), if anything, and what Paul's readers would probably have assumed about these individuals. This we will attempt to do below.

[392] Piper, 43, suggests an additional, possible Jewish argument -- the promises made concerning Isaac "...were all made after the birth of Ishmael so that God could see what sort of person he was. So since he was a 'wild ass of a man' (Gen 16.12) and had an Egyptian mother, God rejected him and chose Isaac."

order to close this loophole in his argument, Paul then proceeds to cite the case of God's electing purpose concerning Jacob and Esau.

From the example of the birth of these twins, Paul brings this first argument to a climax. God's right to elect unconditionally is seen clearly in His dealings with Jacob and Esau. Unlike Ishmael and Isaac, they both have the same set of parents, are conceived in the same act of intercourse, and are still unborn (and thus detached from any consideration of merit or blame) when the promise is made to their mother Rebecca. As with Ishmael, Esau should have been accorded the more honored position as first-born, but God demonstrates his freedom from every external consideration by choosing Jacob instead. In commenting on this episode, Paul allows no contemplation of the possibility that personal distinctives could in any way influence God's choice.

The collectivist position points out that both in Gen 25.23 (=9.12c) and Mal 1.2 (=9.13) it is *peoples, not individuals* who are in view. Paul only quotes the last clause of Gen 25.23 -- as a whole it reads:

> Two nations are in your womb,
>   and two peoples, born of you, shall be divided;
> the one shall be stronger than the other,
>   the elder shall serve the younger.

Likewise, Mal 1.2, 3 ("Yet I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau") is set in a context where Esau is equated with Edom (the descendants of Esau) and God's declaration of hatred toward Esau is illustrated by a pronouncement of historical judgment (past and future) upon the Edomites and their land. In light of the clear association of people groups with Jacob and Esau and of the fact that these passages deal with historical functions and destinies rather than eternal issues, the collectivist argument concludes from Paul's choice of these supporting passages that there is no justification for inferring anything concerning election to salvation and damnation from 9.6-13. Rather, Paul teaches that God's sovereign freedom with regard to the twins (and as a principle in general)

determines who will benefit from the promises of the covenant and enjoy its historically-limited, theocratic privileges.

2.2.2. *The Individualist Thesis*

This interpretation argues that the limited scope of election in the collectivist position: 1) places too much weight on the corporate aspect of the OT texts Paul uses; 2) fails to provide even a provisional solution to the question Paul originally raised in 9.1-5; 3) ignores some critical evidence in 9.6-13 itself concerning the scope of Paul's thought on election; 4) disregards the fact that examples of *praedestinatio gemina* can be found in certain strands of Jewish theology contemporary with Paul (a reality which invalidates the objection that the idea that predestination of individuals to salvation and damnation is a modern one foreign to the Jews of Paul's day); and 5) clashes with Paul's subsequent argumentation in 9.14-23.

1) <u>Old Testament Contexts</u>: As noted above, the strength of the collectivist position lies in the references to nations found in the immediate contexts of the OT verses Paul quotes (particularly Gen 25.23 and Mal 1.2f.).[393] Some scholars are so swayed by this that they give no weight to the fact that the passages in question also necessarily involve an understanding of the particular individuals named.[394] When the prophecy is given to Rebecca, two nations are in her womb in a figurative sense; literally, of course, it is the twins themselves to whom reference is being made. Similarly in Mal 1.2, "Is not Esau Jacob's

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[393] Yet the quotations concerning Isaac and his birth as the child of promise are much more naturally seen to apply fundamentally to Isaac himself, and only secondarily to his descendants. Luz, 69, agrees: "Denn V.9b zeigt, daß Paulus bei ἐν Ἰσαάκ (V. 7) primär an das Individuum Isaak gedacht hat."

[394] So, for example, Leenhardt, 250: "...the names mentioned certainly do not connote individuals so much as peoples who are thus named after their eponymous ancestors, according to Old Testament practice."

brother?" refers originally to the fact that though the twins were of the same

flesh and blood, God chose one and not the other.[395] Certainly in their

immediate OT contexts these verses do focus on the historical[396] aspects of

God's dealings with people groups, but the crucial question in Romans 9 must

be: How does Paul utilize these verses in his argument? Does he rely on the

OT contexts surrounding these quotations, or does he build his arguments on the

basis of the "face value" of these passages stripped of their surrounding OT

modifiers?[397] Might Käsemann be right in his assessment that Paul takes these

quotations out of context and disregards their original sense, that he is "...no

longer concerned with two peoples and their fate but rather in a permanent way

with the election and rejection of two persons who have been raised to the level

of types"?[398] The choice as to whether these verses should be understood col-

lectively or typically must in the end depend on which interpretation best

coheres with the sense of Paul's developing argument.   To this question we

now turn.

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[395] This focus on God's original dealings with the twins is almost certainly reflected in the aorist verbs of the LXX version of Mal 1.2-3 (which Paul quotes in 9.13: τὸν Ἰακὼβ ἠγάπησα, τὸν δὲ Ἠσαῦ ἐμίσησα). Only subsequently does Malachi apply them to Israel and Edom respectively. Cf. Cranfield, 356, n60.

[396] It is a specious argument to infer that since Paul quotes passages from the Old Testament which deal only with historical events and destinies he must therefore be thinking in such terms himself. The Old Testament rarely speaks in terms of eschatological salvation -- certainly not within the earlier writings such as the Pentateuch. If Paul did want to lay a foundation for God's unconditional election of individual Jews to their respective eternal destinies, to what other OT passages could he appeal than precisely those he draws upon? As Piper, 231 n38, concludes: "...Paul's selection of texts may reflect the limited scope of his sources rather than a desire on his part to guard against the implication of predestination unto individual salvation."

[397] Although it is certainly true that in 9.6-13 Paul assumes his readers have a good knowledge of patriarchal history, one may legitimately question whether Paul could or did assume that the Roman Christians would seek to associate the passages he quoted with their immediate contexts (as modern commentators do so expeditiously!).

[398] Käsemann, 264. Cf. also Guerra, 230, who sees an individualistic "double predestinarian perspective enunciated by Paul in Romans 9.11-13."

2) <u>The Scope of 9.1-5</u>: Since 9.6a reflects the particular situation addressed in 9.1-5, and since 9.6b-13 serves as a support for Paul's contention in 9.6a that in spite of the grievous condition of Israel God's word has not fallen, a correct understanding of 9.6-13 must show how Paul's argument offers a solution appropriate to the problem.

If we were correct in our conclusion concerning 9.1-5 that Paul's deep sorrow and unceasing anguish stems from his perception that the majority of Israel is presently cut off from Christ and therefore under eternal condemnation, then the issue at hand concerns how so many of Paul's kinsmen could be eternally lost (in spite of God's promises toward Israel) and yet God still remain faithful to His word. In the course of his missionary work Paul had seen many individual Israelites reject his gospel, and faced the agonizing conclusion that many from the chosen nation *were not chosen to salvation in Christ* -- only such a situation could elicit the deep and lasting anguish which Paul confesses in 9.2f. But even in his anguish over unbelieving Israel, he remains convinced that God is carrying out His purpose, as He has throughout Israel's history -- and that it is an electing purpose. Paul establishes through the stories of Isaac and Jacob the continuing principle that God in His sovereign freedom elects unconditionally those He will bless and those He will not. And he thereby concludes that God has exercised this electing principle in saving some but rejecting others of his contemporary kinsmen.

The collectivist interpretation shows its deficiency by failing to offer any satisfactory link-up with 9.1-5. From its conclusion that Paul thinks of Israel's election in terms of salvation-historical roles or national privileges, one is led to ask why Paul should be so exceedingly grief-stricken by the fact that the majority of Israelites seem to have forfeited their historical position or temporal blessing before God.[399] If this was the problem as Paul saw it, if there was never

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[399] In actual fact, Paul denies in 9.4 that his unbelieving Jewish brothers have forfeited

really a question in the apostle's mind of a multitude of the Jews being eternally condemned, then his declaration of intense sorrow and lasting pain is grossly and misleadingly overstated, for in the final analysis (Paul would acknowledge) ethnic Israel, though losing her privileged earthly status for a time, was firmly in the fold of God's eternal redemption.

The collectivist approach must also explain why Paul, after emphasizing the certain, eschatological hope of Christian salvation in chapter 8, should suddenly change his focus now when considering the scope of the "problem of Israel". If this problem consists merely in Israel's temporary loss of its historical task and position, the apostle could simply say, "There is no threat to the integrity of God's reliability, for although the Jews have presently given up their role as 'a light to the nations', they are in no danger of eternal condemnation." Unless the salvation of the bulk of Israelites is truly in jeopardy, there is no compelling cause for Paul to take up the question of Israel at this point. The placement of chapter 9 after 8 favors the argument that Paul is now concerned with the issue of God's reliability in fulfilling His promises regarding the <u>salvation</u> of the mass of Israel which presently lives in unbelief.

3) <u>Evidence within 9.6-13</u>: As we have argued above, Paul is concerned in verse 6b to delineate a distinction of elections within ethnic Israel -- not all those who belong to the Israel of privilege (cf. 9.3, 4) are actually members of true Israel. The implication that Paul subsequently draws seems to be that only those elected to salvation may accurately be termed 'Israel' as the eschatological people of God. This interpretation is supported by both the structure and vocabulary of verses 6b-8.[400] In these verses Paul parallels οἱ ἐξ 'Ισραήλ with

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such privileges -- οἵτινές εἰσιν 'Ισραηλῖται.... The relative pronoun refers back to Paul's natural kinsmen, and the present tense of εἰμί indicates Paul's belief that the privileges enumerated in 9.4,5 belong precisely to these unbelieving Jews.

[400] For a detailed discussion of this material, cf. Piper, 47-51; also Siegert, 124-25; Rese, *Israel*, 209-10.

τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκός, and οὐ...οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ with οὐ...ταῦτα τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ.

This parallel demonstrates that Paul continues to hold before him the concern of

distinguishing among the members of ethnic Israel. It is only the members of

this select group within larger Israel whom Paul labels "children of God."[401]

But who exactly are these children of God? Paul further defines them in verse

8b as τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας. Thus, the second Israel of verse 6b is

identified with children of God in verse 8a and children of promise in 8b.[402]

Further light may be shed on Paul's meaning here by a comparison with

Galatians 3.26-4.7, which contains substantial linguistic and conceptual parallels

(υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ (3.26; cf. 4.5-7), τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα (3.29), κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν

κληρονόμοι (3.29; cf. 4.7)). In the Galatians context, sons of God = seed of

Abraham = heirs according to the promise. These terms all occur in the con-

text of justification by faith (3.24) and eschatological redemption (4.5f.) -- those

in view have received the outpouring of the Spirit. Paul's usage of these con-

cepts in Galatians lends weight to the argument that in Romans 9 the "true"

Israel of verses 6b-8 refers to those Jews who are heirs of eternal life.[403]

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[401] Piper, 49, notes that Paul's usage of τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 8.16, 17, 21; Phil 2.15; cf. also Eph 5.1) and its synonym υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 8.14, 19; 9.26; 2 Cor 6.18; Gal 3.26; 4.5) always refer to believers. Cf. also Murray, II:11.

[402] Cf. Maier, 353-4.

[403] The phrase τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας occurs only one other time in Paul apart from Rom 9.8 -- Gal 4.28. Piper (50) correctly points out that since the subject matter in both places concerns the "implication of the births of Isaac and Ishmael for Paul's contemporaries", it is highly unlikely this unusual phrase would carry a substantially different meaning in each argu-ment. In the Gal 4 passage, the contrast in verse 3 between the son born "according to the flesh" and the son born "through promise" parallels that in verse 9 between him "who was born according to the flesh" and him "who was born according to the Spirit." Thus the son born through promise is the one born according to the Spirit. Paul applies the phrase "children of promise" (with Isaac as the prototype) to himself and the Galatian Christians as those born of the Spirit. The implication is that to be a child of promise is to be made alive by the power of the Spirit. This understanding from Galatians again supports the interpretation of Rom 9.6-13 which understands Paul to be speaking of a distinction within Israel of those who are elected to salvation and those who are anathema.

Further conceptual, structural and linguistic parallels may be found in Romans 2.25-29, where Paul discusses the identity of a true Jew. The strong structural parallel between 2.28 and 9.6b-8 and the linguistic link in the verb λογίζομαι (2.26; 9.8) support the view that Paul is continuing in 9.6ff. the theme he raised in 2.25ff. Thus it is not because of outward signs (circumcision) or privileges that God reckons individuals[404] righteous or counts them as the true seed of Abraham, but rather, as 9.11f. tells us, because God in His freedom chooses to elect persons to become children of promise. In the same way as not all Israel is Israel (9.6b), so not every Jew is a Jew (2.28).

Lastly, we may appeal to two pivotal words in 9.11 in light of Paul's characteristic usage of them. Πρόθεσις appears for the first time in Romans some twenty verses earlier in 8.28. There it denotes the purpose of God as "defined by the verbs προέγνω and προώρισεν in v. 29,"[405] and thus refers to God's effectual plan to bring to eschatological glorification those whom He has chosen.[406] Elsewhere in the NT,[407] the divine πρόθεσις always refers to God's ultimate saving purpose. It is certainly reasonable, therefore, to assume, in the absence of any compelling evidence to the contrary, that in 9.11 πρόθεσις should carry this same sense. This would then clarify that God's electing purpose in 9.6-13 is a saving purpose, and that for Paul the divine election (as exhibited in the story of Jacob and Esau) involves matters of eternal import.[408]

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[404] Note the subject is in the singular throughout 2.25-29.

[405] Cranfield, I:430.

[406] Cf. Maurer, *TDNT* 8:166-7. In speaking of how Paul uses πρόθεσις in relation to God, Maurer says (166): "Paul adopts πρόθεσις in a wholly new sense when he uses it for the primal decision of God whereby the saving event in Christ and the resultant way of the community to eschatological glorifying are established and set in motion."

[407] Romans 8.28 and 9.11 are the only two locations where πρόθεσις is found in the undisputed Pauline letters. Cf. Ephesians 1.11, 3.11 and 2 Tim 1.9 for similar understandings of the divine purpose.

[408] *Pace* Hübner, 28-9.

Καλέω and its derivatives occur much more regularly in Paul, and are particularly salient in 9.6-29 (9.7, 12, 24, 25, 26). When used theologically by Paul, καλεῖν means not "to invite" but "to designate, to effectually call".[409] Particularly in the present context, where the concept of God's call is linked to His saving purpose[410] and to the execution of His promise, ὁ καλῶν must refer to God who makes effective the election to salvation which He has purposed for the children of promise.

Therefore, in light of the distinction within the nation of Israel that Paul makes in 9.6b, his clarification of that differentiation in 9.7-8 and the parallels of language and thought in Galatians 3-4 and Romans 2, as well as the repetition of pivotal vocabulary from 8.28ff., we find strong justification for concluding that in 9.6-13 Paul envisions God's election in terms of his sovereign freedom to consign individuals to their respective eternal destinies.

4) Jewish Theologies of Predestination Contemporary with Paul: It would be a telling argument against the individualist approach if one could show that no strand of Jewish theology before Paul had ever seriously entertained the view of a divinely predestined election of individual human beings to eternal destinies. But as we have demonstrated in our previous chapter on election in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Qumran community held just such a view. Gerhard Maier, in his detailed 1971 work, *Mensch und Freier Wille nach den jüdischen Religionsparteien zwischen Ben Sira und Paulus*, confirms this through his

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[409] K. L. Schmidt, *TDNT*, 3.489, writes: "In general we may say of our calling by God in Christ that the uniform view of Paul and his disciples is that God calls men in Christ through His own means and for His own purpose.... The fact that God is the καλῶν and that Christians are the κεκλημένοι, with no qualifying addition, makes it clear that *in the NT καλεῖν is a technical term for the process of salvation* [my emphasis].... If God or Christ calls a man, this calling or naming is a *verbum efficax*."

[410] It is a telling fact that πρόθεσις and a derivative of καλεῖν (κλητοῖς) occur together previously in Rom 8.28.

broad study on predestination in Jewish thought. Asking how Romans 9-11 should be viewed in light of the various Jewish predestinarian/free will traditions extant in Paul's day, he ultimately concludes that Paul's thinking in these crucial chapters, and particularly in chapter 9, follows along the line of OT predestinarian tradition which developed through Sirach 33 into its most radical, individualistic form at Qumran.[411] The apostle, with this background as his foundation, builds his argument in Romans 9.6ff. *in conscious opposition to the generally known Pharisaic position* (cf. Ps Sol 9.4,5) *that for God to act justly, human beings must have freedom of will in order to be held accountable for their lives.*[412] Whether this in the final analysis is true of Paul's argument in 9.6ff., Maier clearly demonstrates that the view of predestination and election attributed to Paul by the individualist position has its roots and parallel in a strand of OT tradition which culminates in the double predestinarian teaching of Qumran. The question of determinism and indeterminism is not simply a "modern problem"[413] read by Western theologians back into the text of Romans 9, but surfaced in Paul's day as well.[414] Concerning 9.11-13 Maier concludes,

> Der Apostel erklärt hier also die gegenwärtige Situation [of Israel's unbelief] als einen Ausfluß der praedestinatio gemina. Man könnte die Geschichte der Exegese von Rö 9 als eine Ges-

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[411] Cf. particularly pp. 356-66, 376-82.

[412] Maier, 359ff., argues that in Pharisaic teaching the words πρόθεσις (τοῦ θεοῦ) and ἐκλογή become *termini technici* for predestination and free will respectively. In 9.11, Paul purposely employs these two words, and applies the latter to God in opposition to the Pharisaic position which sought to highlight human freedom of will so as to keep the arena of soteriology free from the sphere of God's predestination. Hence, Maier believes that ἐκλογή in 9.11 should be translated as "free will/freedom", thereby emphasizing God's complete and unbounded freedom to choose as He pleases, unconstrained by any human ἐκλογή.

[413] Cf. Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 70.

[414] Schürer, Vermes, Millar and Black, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, 2:392-4, surveys various Jewish approaches to this issue and concludes: "Thus, the problem of divine providence and human freedom was a subject of reflection for Judaism in general" (393).

chichte von versuchen bezeichnen, dieser klaren Erkenntnis aus-zuweichen.[415]

5) Paul's Subsequent Argumentation in 9.14-23: In these verses, Paul defends God's right to predestine freely according to His electing purpose.[416] The key issues center again on whom God predestines and to what end. We will argue (in concert with Dinkler and others)[417] that "Paul...in 9.14-23 defends the divine election and makes it clear that its very scope is to be seen not in the election of the biological people as a whole but in the election of the individual."[418] As with 9.1-13, Paul continues to keep the question of the condemnation of his unbelieving kinsmen in mind as he now wrestles with the controversy over the righteousness of God in choosing some to eternal life and rejecting others apart from any human distinctives. We shall consider in detail the argument of 9.14-23 following the summary of 9.6-13 below.

2.2.3. Summary

These verses serve as Paul's first effort to solve the problem of how a number of Israelites within the elect people could be accursed and cut off from God and yet God still remain true to His promises. Paul's opening declaration is that God's word has not failed (verse 6); indeed He has remained faithful to His purposes by freely and sovereignly choosing those to whom the promises ultimately and effectually apply. Not all who claim physical descent from Israel are reckoned heirs of God's promise to Abraham, but rather only those whom God has chosen, apart from any human effort or merit (verses 6b-11). This is

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[415] Maier, 355-6.

[416] Maier, 366, writes of 9.14-29: "Dem Ganzen könnte man die Überschrift geben: 'Gottes Recht auf freie Gnadenwahl'."

[417] Cf. Käsemann, 255f.; Piper, 134-38; 152-62; 183-6.

[418] Dinkler, "Historical and Eschatological Israel in Romans," 114.

all "in order that God's purpose of election might continue" (ἵνα ἡ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένῃ) [verse 11]. To support his contention in verses 6b-7 that not all those physically descended from Abraham belong to true Israel, Paul appeals to two events of divine selection. Isaac as the child of promise singled out by God becomes the paragon of the "children of promise", i.e., those chosen for salvation. Further, within the lineage of Isaac, God chooses between the twins Jacob and Esau before their birth, ignoring the right of primogeniture and emphasizing that His election depends on no human status, merit or activity but instead solely on His sovereign electing purposes. This strong pronouncement by Paul raises serious questions about the righteousness of God. If God is so arbitrary, saving people not on the basis of merit or status or good effort, then how can He be called just? If He is merciful to some and rejects others apart from any considerations outside Himself, where is His righteousness? Paul is not unaware of these objections, and he proceeds in verses 14-23 to answer them by appeal to God's glory and purposes.[419]

2.3. Romans 9.14-23

Overview: As a whole, this subsection defends Paul's teaching in verses 6-13 against the objection that God is unrighteous in His dealings with Israel.[420] His defense focuses *specifically* on the issue of God's right to elect unconditionally and on His purposes therein, **not** *generally* on the question of God's

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[419] Cranfield, 471, notes: "... the process of showing that the pattern of God's dealings with contemporary Israel is consistent with the pattern of His dealings with the patriarchs raises the question whether God's ways have not all along been unjust."

[420] Though Pharaoh is the main example Paul uses in this section to demonstrate God's sovereignty in hardening individuals, the purpose of verses 14-23 is to answer how God can be righteous in choosing some and rejecting others (verses 6-13), particularly in rejecting the majority of Paul's contemporary kinsmen (verses 1-5). God's righteousness in hardening Pharaoh parallels His righteousness in dealing with Israel in Paul's day.

faithfulness to the covenant with Israel. The passage is composed of two smaller units, verses 14-18 and verses 19-23.

As we noted in the summary of verses 6-13 above, Paul's understanding of God's sovereignty in carrying out His purposes of election has raised the question of God's righteousness. Working on the assumption that God's election should be on the basis of legitimate and noteworthy human distinctives, Paul's opponent[421] challenges the apostle's view by arguing that Paul's perspective makes God out to be unrighteous. So, in verses 14-18 the apostle seeks to respond to a two-part objection which may be outlined as follows: 1) if Paul is right, then God is unjust. But God cannot be unjust; therefore, 2) Paul must be wrong about God's freedom to elect unconditionally. Paul denies any unrighteousness in God, and defends His understanding by means of two OT quotations (verses 15, 17) which demonstrate that God's freedom to show mercy or harden hearts apart from any human distinctives is central to God's all-glorious nature. The apostle sees Ex 33.19 as affirming that God's righteousness consists in His paramount commitment to maintain and manifest His glory.[422] Exodus 9.16 shows God exercising this righteousness in hardening Pharaoh, thereby setting the stage for the awesome demonstration of His power and glorification of His name in the Exodus event. In verses 16 and 18, Paul restates the principle of divine sovereignty[423] which was clearly implied in

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[421] Whether Paul's opponent was real or imagined for the sake of diatribe we need not discuss here. What can be affirmed with certainty is that the arguments Paul raises through this objector are not "straw men" but rather profound and substantial, ones which he presumably encountered repeatedly in his many dialogues with fellow Jews. The fact that Paul's overall argument throughout 9:1-23 is so tightly woven indicates that this discourse was well thought through and rehearsed, at least partly in response to the skepticism and oppositon he encountered among the Jews during his missionary activities.

[422] So Schlier, 297; Piper, 162.

[423] Sanday and Headlam entitle 9.14-18 *The Divine Sovereignty in the Old Testament*; Barrett classifies verses 14-29 under the heading *God's Sovereignty*.

verses 11-13, and concludes that since unconditional election does not imply any divine unrighteousness, God therefore can and indeed does elect unconditionally.

In the second unit (verses 19-23), Paul anticipates a further objection to His defense of God's righteousness, rejects the presumption implied in his objector's question, and counters the criticism by appeal to God's rights as Creator over His creation and His righteous purposes in displaying the full extent of His glory. To this end he employs the familiar imagery of potter and clay to highlight divine sovereignty over the creation, and to declare more fully the purposes of God in election (cf. verse 11) as he understands them.

2.3.1. Romans 9.14-18

The structure of these verses has occasioned some debate among commentators. The major issue concerns the γάρ introducing verse 17. Certainly γάρ here indicates support for what precedes, but does verse 17 parallel verse 15 and so act as a ground for verse 14 (so Lagrange, Wilckens, Kuss, Cranfield, Piper) or does it support verse 16 alone (Sanday and Headlam, Schlatter, Dunn)? The former view appeals to the formal parallel structure of the passage: the ἄρα οὖν of verse 18 corresponds to that of verse 16, and the γὰρ of verse 17 corresponds to that of verse 15. Verse 17 then would serve the same function as verse 15 in supporting Paul's denial of unrighteousness in God (verse 14).[424] The latter view rests on the argument that it is not necessary to leap back over two verses to attach verse 17 to verse 14 when it makes perfectly good sense to link it with what immediately precedes in verse 16. But perhaps

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[424] In distinction to Lagrange, et.al., Piper (139) notes that verse 15 functions bilaterally to support both verses 14 and 16, so that the γάρ of verse 17 can in fact relate to verses 14-16 *in toto*. Then the Ex 9.16 passage in verse 17 would provide the negative counterpart (hardening) to verse 15 (mercy) and so act as a second support for God's righteousness in acting as He does to freely elect and reject.

most compelling is the fact that Paul's summary conclusion in verse 18 (gathering mercy and hardening together under the rubric of God's sovereign will) supports the former interpretation by indicating that God's mercy and hardening both play important functions in the apostle's defense of divine righteousness.

The opening question of verse 14 (Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν;) serves as a stylistic device to introduce an objection which Paul then proceeds to reject. Cranfield notes that in all four parallel occurrences, Paul employs Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν when he recognizes that a false conclusion might be drawn from what he has said; the apostle then states and rejects the false conclusion, and finally presents the correct one.[425]

The false conclusion -- that God is unrighteous for acting unconditionally in election either to bless or reject -- is contained implicitly in the second question, μὴ ἀδικία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ; Presumably this is not the way the objector himself would phrase the question.[426] Μή expects a negative answer to the question: "God is not unjust, is He?"; the objector probably would state the question using οὖ: "Do you mean to say that God is unjust?". Dunn's view that "[This] question is one which derives from faith, not from skepticism or hostile unbelief"[427] misses the point. Certainly Paul's opponents believed God to be righteous (though apparently in a different way than Paul [see below]) -- they accused Paul of taking a theological position which forced him to maintain that

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[425] Cranfield, 481-2.

[426] Piper, 70, notes that in every place in Romans where μὴ γένοιτο answers a question stated in negative form, the negative particle used in the question is μὴ (3.3f, 5f; 9.14f; 11.1, 11). He concludes that this pattern is a rhetorical device used by Paul whereby he introduces an opponent's objections in a form already containing his own denial (cf. also Siegert, 128). Perhaps Paul uses this device here so as to keep his own lips free from the blasphemous assertion, even in question form, that God might be unrighteous. (C. Müller, 30 n22: "Die Formulierung ist auf die Scheu zurückzuführen, Gott und ἀδικία zusammenzubringen." Cf. also Murray, II:25; Morris, 359.)

[427] Dunn, 2:551.

God was unrighteous. Paul responds forcefully with μὴ γένοιτο -- "God forbid!" -- which then, as always in Paul (see in Romans alone: 3.6, 31; 6.2, 15; 7.7, 13; 11.1, 11), is followed by an explanation.[428]

Paul rejects the understanding of divine righteousness used by his opponents (that God is just in electing people on the basis of worthwhile distinctives -- cf. especially verse 11 where Paul counters this assumption),[429] and proceeds instead to offer and defend his own view of God's righteousness in verses 15-18. Ἀδικία is opposed not only to δικαιοσύνη in Paul's thought but also to ἀλήθεια (Rom 1.18; 2.6-8; 3.4-7, esp. 5b; cf. also 2 Thess 2.9-12). Piper therefore defines it here as "... a disposition and conduct which contradicts truth, particularly the truth about God, namely that He is glorious above all creation and worthy of all honor, thanks and trust."[430] This perspective will help to show more clearly how Paul intends his readers to understand the way in which God's purposes in election do not make Him ἄδικος, but rather contribute in a necessary way to His δικαιοσύνη.

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[428] For more detailed information on μὴ γένοιτο as a rhetorical device common to the diatribe, cf. A. J. Malherbe, "MH ΓΕΝΟΙΤΟ in the Diatribe and Paul," *HTR* 73 (1980), 231-40; S. K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (SBLDS 57; Chico: Scholars Press, 1981).

The fact that Paul, in spite of what he has just argued, feels perfectly able to maintain that God is righteous indicates forcefully that he and his opponents are working with two different definitions of righteousness. Verses 6-13 reveal Paul's perception of his opponents' definition -- for them God is righteous in election when He chooses individuals on the basis of valid human distinctives relating to Abrahamic lineage or good works. For Paul, God's righteousness in election is not grounded in anything external to His own nature, as we shall see.

[429] It might be argued that the view against which Paul contends is not really that of his opponents but only Paul's distorted perception of their view. However, in light of Paul's theological acumen, and his regular and extended interaction with these opponents (as reflected in the remarkably well-thought-out reasonings found in 9:1-23), it is highly unlikely that Paul could have misconstrued so badly the central point of his opponents' position. Presumably they would have quickly corrected him in any debate.

[430] Piper, 71. For an informative and well-reasoned study of "the righteousness of God" in the OT and in Romans, cf. Piper, 71-130.

In supporting the position that God is righteous in fulfilling His electing

purpose, Paul appeals to two OT passages, Ex 33.19 and Ex 9.16. His logic is

not immediately apparent,[431] and so some commentators have argued that Paul

did not even attempt to answer the objection (Munck, Nygren, Käsemann,

Kuss, Fitzmyer).[432] But Paul's typical approach is to give a supporting argu-

ment after he has refuted a question with μὴ γένοιτο (see above). So the crucial

interpretive question of verses 14-18 is: How can Paul defend his declaration

that God is not unrighteous by saying, "He said to Moses, 'I will have mercy on

whomsoever I have mercy and have compassion on whomsoever I have compas-

sion,'" and then further quoting Ex 9.16? Of those commentators who argue

that Paul does give an answer, the majority contend that Paul shifts the argu-

ment away from justice toward mercy; i.e., the issue of election cannot be

understood in terms of justice, but only from the perspective of mercy -- if we

seek to claim justice before God, then we all must fall under judgment. This

view depends on the unspoken assumption being made before verse 15 -- that all

have sinned and are worthy of judgment. Justice would mean condemnation for

all; election means God has moved from the sphere of justice into that of

mercy; hence God is not unjust in having mercy upon some, for all deserve

judgment. However, this perspective flies in the face of Paul's declaration in

verses 11-13 that God's choices of election and rejection both are independent

of any human distinctives. Further, it also (as with Munck, et.al.) does not

provide a direct answer to the opponent's question, but rather denies that the

question has any validity.

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[431] In fact, many early church fathers, indicating their inability to link this section with Paul's argument, determined that most or all of verses 14-19 was not Paul's own defense but the ongoing objection of an imaginary opponent. See Cranfield, 482 n2; Gorday, 77; and for an excellent summary, Sanday and Headlam, 253, 269-72.

[432] Cf. also Badenas, 100, who speaks of Paul's responses as "categorical refutations."

Yet there are a few scholars who argue that in verses 15ff. Paul really does seek to rebut the charge of injustice raised by God's sovereign election without regard to human distinctives. In his book *The Justification of God*, John Piper deals principally with this question. His central thesis is that "...in choosing unconditionally those on whom he will have mercy and those whom he will harden God is not unrighteous for in this 'electing purpose' he is acting out of a full allegiance to his name and esteem for his glory."[433] Concerning the Exodus passage in Rom 9.15, he concludes from a study of its OT context

> ...that Ex 33.19, as a brief, preliminary declaration of the verbal theophany which follows in Ex 34.6,7, constitutes a manifestation of God's glory (Ex 33.18), a "passing by" of his goodness (33.19a) and a proclamation of his name (33.19b). These realities overlap in the Ex context so that we can say God's glory and his name consist fundamentally in his propensity to show mercy and his sovereign freedom in its distribution. Or to put it more precisely, it is the glory of God and his essential nature mainly to dispense mercy (but also wrath, Ex 34.7) on whomever he pleases apart from any constraint originating outside his own will. This is the essence of what it means to be God. This is his name.[434]

In Romans 9.14ff. Paul understands the righteousness of God to be "his unswerving commitment always to preserve the honor of his name and display his glory."[435] Hence in freely and sovereignly dispensing mercy and hardening in election and rejection, God is acting in accord with His essential nature, and thereby preserving His righteousness. For God to act in any other way would be unjust.

In our opinion, Piper has uncovered the heart of the issue. Paul, far from ignoring the context of Ex 33.19 (so Schlier), depends on it in his defense of God's righteousness.[436] In Ex 33.18-23 we see the concepts of God's glory,

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[433] Piper, 204.

[434] Ibid., 203. Cf. also 55-67.

[435] Ibid., 203.

[436] τῷ Μωϋσεῖ serves both to indicate the original context of this OT quote (Ex 33.19) which Paul no doubt wishes the reader to call to mind and also to introduce the first member of

name, freedom,[437] and mercy all tied together in the framework of God's self-revelation. Paul no doubt selects this passage to support the righteousness of God because more than any other text in the OT it highlights God's essential nature (His propensity to be gracious and His sovereign freedom in the exercise of that grace).[438] More than likely it carries this same sense in Paul's context.[439] In Ex 33.19 and 9.16 (as we shall see) Paul finds OT support for the notion that God preserves and displays the glory of His name precisely in the working out of His sovereign freedom through *both* mercy and hardening.

If this accurately represents Paul's meaning, then we may deduce that Paul seeks to defend God's righteousness in unconditional election by citing two OT texts which reveal that God's name is proclaimed and His power demonstrated most gloriously by His exercising sovereign freedom to show mercy or to harden. A necessary implication from this is that since God's name and glory are inextricably tied with His freedom to elect or to reject, therefore

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a further contrasting pair out of salvation history (continuing Paul's theme of election and rejection from verses 6-13: Isaac vs. Ishmael, Jacob vs. Esau, and now Moses vs. Pharaoh [v 17]). Concerning the reference to Moses, Dunn (552) says "... the specific mention of Moses surely indicates that Paul had in mind the particular character of the utterance as an exceptional unveiling of God, of his glory and his name (Exod 33:18-19)."

[437] Sanday and Headlam (254) and Murray (2:25, n33) are correct in noting that emphasis should be placed on the double repetition of ὅν ἄν (to be translated "whomsoever"), which in Paul's argument underlines God's sovereign freedom in dispensing or withholding mercy.

[438] Dunn, 562: "... Exod 33.12-23 comes closer than anywhere else in the Jewish scriptures to revealing the innermost nature of God."

[439] Supportive of this understanding is Paul's second OT quote, Ex 9.16 (= Rom 9.17), relating to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. If Paul were simply interested in pointing out God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart, there were numerous texts he could have chosen which actually say this. Instead he picks Ex 9.16, which does not directly mention hardening (though this is naturally inferred from its meaning). Why? The most likely explanation is that Ex 9.16 offers him two supports in connection with Ex 33.19 that no other verse could match: 1) the reference again to God's name (Müller, 31 n25, writes, "Das Zitat Ex. 33,19 hat insofern Gewicht, als das Judentum hier den Namen Gottes umschreiben fand [Michel 208]. Sicher nicht zufällig erscheint V. 17 auch das Stichwort ὄνομα."); and 2) the linkage of Pharaoh's hardening with God's purposes of displaying His power and magnifying His name.

for God to act righteously, He *must* act freely in the interests of His glory, apart from any human distinctives or external constraints, in determining the distribution or withholding of His mercy.

Hence, God's righteousness is neither singular adherence to some ultimate ethical norm, nor in the final analysis His faithfulness to the particular claims of a covenant relationship,[440] but something deeper which underlies them both. At its heart, the righteousness of God consists in His single-minded allegiance to the glory of His name. It is this consideration which moves God to enter into a covenant relationship with Israel, as a means of spreading the glory of His name to all the world -- His allegiance to His name is primary; His allegiance to Israel, while substantial, is secondary.[441]

In light of this, Paul can maintain that God is not unrighteous in choosing some Israelites while rejecting others, because precisely in the free exercise of His sovereign grace God demonstrates the glory of His name, and so remains righteous.

The emphasis on God's freedom to show mercy to *whomsoever* He chooses is demonstrated in verses 15-16 by the use and repetition of ὃς ἄν and by the primary inference Paul draws from his quotation of Ex 33.19: ἄρα οὖν οὐ τοῦ θέλοντος οὐδὲ τοῦ τρέχοντος ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐλεῶντος θεοῦ. Whether or not one receives mercy from God[442] does not depend on any human "willing or running",[443] but only on the sovereign decision of God.[444]

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[440] K. Koch (*THAT*, II, 516) has observed how infrequently the terms "righteousness" [of God] and "covenant" are found in the same context.

[441] Piper, 90: "The maintenance and display of God's honor is the most fundamental determination of His righteous relations with Israel."

[442] The subject of verse 16 is not explicitly stated, but in light of τοῦ ἐλεῶντος θεοῦ and verse 15 we may render it "the gift of God's mercy." The further question of whether Paul views this mercy as the fullness of salvation in Christ or God's temporal blessings within history we will attempt to answer below.

[443] On τρέχειν and θέλειν as common Hellenistic idioms for human striving and effort, cf. V. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif*, 135-38.

We may now ask what Paul intended by his use of ἐλεέω/ἔλεος. It is either a) God's favor within temporal history with no particular reference to eternal destiny, or b) eternal salvation in Christ. To decide this we must consider: 1) how Paul uses this word family elsewhere in his writings, particularly Romans; 2) how Paul understands hardening, which he employs as the opposite to mercy; and 3) the preceding context of Romans 9.

1) In addition to 9.15,16,18, ἐλεέω occurs in 11.30,31,32 with God as the assumed or stated subject (it is found also in 12.8, but there applies to the

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[444] Cranfield (484) seeks to understand the relationship between God's freedom and His mercy in terms of His freedom *from* being forced by any human claims to show mercy, and yet His intention ultimately to show mercy to all, because His will is at heart a merciful will. So he writes concerning Ex 33.19 that "...Paul understood them [the words from Exodus] to be affirming emphatically the *freedom* of God's mercy (and therefore the fact that God's mercy is not something to which men can establish a claim whether on the ground of parentage or of works), and at the same time making it clear that it is the freedom of God's *mercy* that is being affirmed, and not some unqualified will of God behind, and distinct from, His merciful will. And, understanding Paul thus, we take it that this quotation, set as it is at a keypoint in the argument, must be allowed to control the interpretation of what follows (including verse 18!)."

This interpretation, though attractive, is not allowed by the structure of verses 14-18, where God's activities of showing mercy and of hardening are set in parallel. This is seen most clearly in verse 18, and Cranfield feels the force of it, for he makes it clear in his scheme that verse 15 must serve as the interpretive key even for verse 18. It hardly seems fair, however, to reinterpret the concluding verse (which is sufficiently clear in and of itself, though perhaps unpalatable to some) of Paul's argument in verses 14-18 according to one element of the argument, when Paul is clearly seeking to uphold both elements: God has mercy on whom He wills (summarizing verses 15-16), and He hardens whom He wills (verse 17). Further, the whole emphasis of Paul's argument from verse 6 onward has been to highlight God's unlimited freedom to elect or reject according to His own purposes in order to explain how the majority of Israel stands under the anathematization of God. If Paul were to argue now that God's freedom is ultimately a freedom only to be merciful, he would be undermining his previous argument. In addition, if Paul truly understood God's hardening to be completely embraced by His mercy, then his highly charged statements of anguish concerning the fate of his kinsmen ring rather hollow. Cranfield's attempt to address this (489) fails, in our opinion, to explain the force of Paul's emotion: "To miss the inestimable privilege of belonging here in this present life to the company of those who are conscious and (more or less) willing and grateful witnesses to God's grace is far indeed from being a trivial loss."

It has been argued by numerous scholars along with Cranfield that mercy is the keynote of Romans 9-11 (cf. Barth, 116; Barrett, 185, 187; Dunn, 552) and "the key word in this section (verses 15, 16, 18)" (Dunn, 552; cf. 553: "central motif"). But this latter view is misleading, for though ἐλεέω does occur four times in these four verses, two are in the quote of Ex 33.19 and the others are balanced in their usage by a contrast with human effort on the one hand and a contrast with divine hardening on the other. Mercy *per se* is not the key thought of 9.14-18; rather, God's absolute freedom to show mercy or harden according to His own glorious ends continues to hold preeminence in Paul's argument.

human exercise of the spiritual gift of mercy).[445] Ἔλεος is found in Paul only at 9.23, 11.31, 15.9 and Gal 6.16.[446] In every one of these instances, God's mercy is defined in terms of eschatological salvation in Christ. This provides a compelling rationale for understanding "mercy" in 9.15-18 also in eternal, salvific terms.

2) Within Paul's writings, σκληρύνω occurs only in Romans 9.18. The verbal noun σκληρότης is found in Rom 2.5, where it refers to that condition of heart which will reap God's eschatological wrath ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ. In 9.18 Paul declares that God hardens whom He will. Σκληρύνω here refers back to the example of Pharaoh in 9.17 and God's hardening of the Egyptian leader's heart. Munck[447] argues that Pharaoh should be considered like Ishmael and Esau (in verses 6-13) as types of those who resist God and pose an historical threat to the flow of *Heilsge-schichte*. But this attempted parallel lacks any foundation in Romans 9, for nowhere does Paul hint that Ishmael or Esau pose a threat to God's purposes (even Pharaoh in his earthly power is not seen as a threat to God's plan but rather an unwilling participant, fulfilling God's sovereign intentions). Rather,

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[445] Outside of Romans, ἐλεέω is used only 3 times by Paul: 1 Cor 7.25; 2 Cor 4.1; and Phil 2.27. Both Corinthian passages refer to Paul's apostolic ministry as something he exercises "by God's mercy". This could be an allusion either to his salvation and commissioning by Christ or to a more general gracious empowerment for his earthly responsibilities. As such they are inconclusive. Phil 2.27, on the other hand, refers directly the physical healing of Epaphroditus, a co-worker with Paul, with the words: ἀλλὰ ὁ θεὸς ἐλέησεν αὐτόν. Thus, ἐλεέω can be used to refer to mercy given by God that is temporal in nature.

[446] In Gal 6.16, ἔλεος is used with εἰρήνη in what appears to be a formula statement of blessing. It is likely that ἔλεος serves here as a synonym for the more regular χάρις, which Paul in fact uses two verses later for his final blessing upon his readers. Bultmann (*TDNT* 2:484) writes concerning this verse: "Mention of God's ἔλεος does not always have express reference to the Christ event. It may simply denote the grace of God, with a stronger or weaker suggestion that this grace has come through Christ."

[447] Munck, 44f.; cf. also Lagrange, 234.

their purpose in Paul's argument is to affirm the unconditional freedom of God

to reject individuals apart from physical lineage or human works (verse 11).[448]

What does Paul intend by σκληρύνει in 9.18? Generally, there are two

interpretations: 1) it refers not to eternal destinies but rather to a temporary, his-

torical rejection -- perhaps with an ultimately merciful result (so Sanday and

Headlam [but see 266 for talk of theoretical damnation], Munck, Lagrange,

Zahn, Cranfield); or 2) it refers to eternal reprobation (Michel, Luz, G. Maier,

Kuss, Käsemann, Piper).

Against the latter view, it is generally argued that since this statement

about hardening is made particularly with reference to Pharaoh, and since Ex 4-

14 is concerned solely with God's orchestrating certain events within history,

not His determination of eternal destinies, God's hardening activity has nothing

to do with eternal damnation.

It may be readily admitted that the OT writer is silent with regard to

Pharaoh's eternal destiny -- such an issue was not the concern of early

Israelites. But to infer from the OT narrators' limited focus on God's work

within history that Paul does not mean something more by hardening is less than

fair. Such a conclusion must be decided by Paul's context, not that of the

Exodus quote. The critical question to be answered is what Paul intended

through his use of σκληρύνω. From Paul's use of σκληρότης in 2.5 and the

parallel between mercy and hardening as opposites[449] in 9.18 with "vessels of

mercy" and "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction" as opposites in 9.22-23

we find strong indicators that for Paul hardening and eschatological wrath are

closely linked.

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[448] Cf. Alan Segal, *Paul the Apostle*, 277: "Paul puts the non-Christian Jews of his time on the same level as Ishmael and Esau and also with Pharaoh."

[449] So Luz, 77 n208: "Σκληρύνω in V. 18 wird wohl als Gegensatz zu ἐλεέω ebenfalls eschatologisch gefaßt werden müssen, also nicht als vorübergehende Verhärtung...."

Further light may be shed on Paul's understanding of the scope of God's hardening activity by considering the apostle's use of πωρόω. If Schmidt (*TDNT*, 5:1030) is right that σκληρύνω and πωρόω are virtual synonyms, then we have further evidence in Romans 11.5-8 that hardening refers not just to historical roles but to exclusion from salvation.[450] The verb occurs in 11.7 and the noun πώρωσις in 11.25. In both cases it refers to a condition of heart which excludes from salvation those so affected. This is particularly clear in 11.7, where those hardened are identified as the Israel which "failed to obtain what it sought." This is a reference back to 9.30-32, where Paul declares that what Israel sought to obtain was a righteousness before God which would enable her to stand justified on the day of judgment (cf. 10.1ff., where Paul echoes his yearning for Israel's salvation which she has forfeited through seeking to establish a righteousness of her own instead of submitting to God's righteousness). If Paul uses πωρόω/πώρωσις in chapter 11 with reference to a condition of heart which excludes one from participation in God's eschatological salvation, then it is likely that σκληρύνω in 9.18 carries the same meaning in his argument, and here implies the opposite of eschatological mercy, i.e., reprobation or eternal destruction.

3) This accords well with the flow of Paul's argument in 9.1-13. In verses 14-18 Paul answers an objector who claims that God is unrighteous if he *unconditionally* elects some out of Israel and rejects the rest. Paul's response must deal with the issue raised in verses 6-13 concerning God's actions, defending God's righteousness in loving some and hating others, choosing some and rejecting others. The flow of argument requires that Paul grapple with both

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[450] Schmidt, *TDNT* 5:1030, observes that σκληρύνω "...occurs 6 times in the NT, always fig., Ac.19:9; R.9:18; Hb.3:8,13,15; 4:7, with exactly the same sense as πωρόω." Cf. also πώρωσις in Eph 4.18 and σκληρότης in Rom 2.5.

sides of God's sovereign freedom.[451] What Paul infers from Ex 33.19 and Ex

9.16 is the principle of God's freedom, rooted in His nature, to be merciful or

to harden according to His own purposes. Having demonstrated the principle of

God's freedom to harden in the example of Pharaoh, Paul proceeds to formulate

a general principle which will later be applied to his primary concern implicit in

9.1-5, the intractability of the Jews.

Thus, in the same way that God demonstrates His sovereign freedom in

determining those He saves, He also demonstrates it in freely rejecting others

(cf. 9.13). The scope of God's freedom to which Paul applies this principle

embraces the issue of salvation. Thus, one cannot avoid the conclusion that in

verse 18 Paul openly espouses double predestination.[452]

Paul's modification[453] and use of Ex 9.16 in verse 17 also supports this

perspective. The thought from Ex 9.16 on which Paul capitalizes is that

although God could indeed have destroyed Pharaoh at an early stage, such was

not His purpose. Rather, God placed and maintained Pharaoh in power so that

He might display His mastery in an *extended* manner and so exalt His name

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[451] This is supported by the fact that 9.16 provides a restatement of the crucial truth
of 9.11 that God's election depends not on works but on God's call alone, indicating that Paul is
continuing to weave his thoughts around this central thread of his argument.

[452] So Käsemann, 268, speaks of Paul's view of salvation history in terms of *gemina
praedestinatio*.

[453] Paul's departures from the LXX rendering of Ex 9.16 are significant in that they
serve to bring out more keenly the sovereignty of God's purpose. He replaces ἕνεκεν τούτου
with εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, a telic phrase which removes the ambiguity of the LXX and strengthens the
thought of purpose. Further, in replacing διετηρήθης with ἐξήγειρά σε he moves from the 2nd
person passive of the LXX "you have been kept alive" to the first person active "I have raised
you up", thereby emphasizing God's sovereign, intentional activity. The purpose for which
God raises up Pharaoh as a foil looks forward to the demonstration of His mighty power.
ἐξεγείρω in this context means "to raise up on the stage of history" (so Murray, Black, Cran-
field, Piper, Dunn), not "to let live, preserve safe" (as if God is telling Pharaoh that He could
have annihilated him in the 6th plague but decided instead to preserve his life). It translates
הֶעֱמַדְתִּיךָ (hiphil of עָמַד) which typically means "to set up, appoint, cause to stand," and here
most naturally refers to God's initial act within history of raising up Pharaoh to be king of
Egypt.

throughout the earth. In Paul's mind (and in line with the original intent of Ex 4-14 [see in particular Ex 10.1-2]), such a raising of Pharaoh to serve as a foil for God necessarily implies that the divine hardening of Pharaoh's heart occurs prior to and without any consideration[454] of Pharaoh's own actions.[455]

The two ὅπως clauses in verse 17 parallel and further explain the purpose clause of verse 11 (ἵνα ἡ κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένῃ), underlining the counterbalancing truth that hardening/rejection serves God's purpose of election as well as His mercy.

A key for understanding Paul's meaning here lies in the phrases τὴν δύναμίν μου and τὸ ὄνομά μου.[456] Cranfield argues that since Paul has used δύναμις only two other times in Romans up to now (1.16b, 20) and in 1.16 it is linked so clearly with the gospel and salvation, he most probably sees τὴν δύναμίν μου here as God's saving power, *not* as unqualified power to be merciful *or* to destroy. And in doing so, Paul reflects accurately the context of Ex 9.16.[457] But perhaps this is too hasty an assessment. There is no doubt that the

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[454] Dunn, 554-55, correctly notes: "...Paul for his part has in view the divine initiative.... So to look for reasons for God's hardening in Pharaoh's "evil disposition" or previous self-hardening (Lagrange, Murray, Leenhardt) is a rationalizing expediency.... Such a thought clearly has no place in Paul's exposition and in fact contradicts what Paul has been so careful to stress in vv 11 and 16 (Michel; Schmidt; Blackman, 130; Luz, 78 n211; Käsemann; Piper, 154-56)."

[455] Note the parallel of Ex 9.16 with 10.1,2 where God says to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your son's son how I have made sport of the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them; that you may know that I am the Lord." Here God's act of hardening is linked with His same purpose of demonstrating His power and glory.

   10.1-2 also indicate that God's display of power is meant not just for Pharaoh but for God's people, that they may rejoice in this deliverance wrought by divine mercy on their behalf. This provides an interesting parallel to what Paul says in 9.23 of God's revelation of His glory to the vessels of mercy.

[456] So Cranfield, 487, and Käsemann, 268.

[457] Cranfield, 487: "Moreover, in so doing he would not have been untrue to what is after all the general sense of the Exodus passage; for there too the thought is not of a mere show of unqualified power, of power for its own sake, but of power directed toward the deliverance of God's people." Dunn, 554, takes the same line: "... the thought is not so much of judgment directed against Pharaoh but of God's covenant mercy to Israel."

Exodus account (and Paul, too, for that matter -- see 9.23) seeks to stress that the display of God's power is meant not just for Pharaoh but also for His chosen people. But surely not in the same way. God's demonstration of power **against** Pharaoh serves to highlight His power **on behalf of** His people. It is perhaps misleading to say with Cranfield (488), "He [Pharaoh] too is a witness, albeit an unwilling, unbelieving and ungrateful witness, to the saving power and truth of God." It is true that Pharaoh "serves the gracious purpose of God,"[458] but not from within that gracious purpose. God's power manifests itself to Him in judgment.[459]

If in verse 15 ὄνομα indicates God's glorious character as the One who sovereignly distributes mercy (but also, by way of corollary, wrath -- see Ex 34.7), here in verse 17 Paul focuses on that corollary: God glorifies His name not only in being merciful but also in rejecting. God's raising up of Pharaoh to the height of earthly power and then decisively defeating him brings glory to God among the nations, not only within Israel. Thus in Paul's argument δύναμις and ὄνομα are closely linked.[460] And if δύναμις in 1.16 is seen as eschatological power (to save), it is probable that Paul[461] also sees it here in those terms -- as eschatological power exercised both in judgment toward Pharaoh and salvation toward Israel.[462]

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[458] Cranfield, 488. Cf. also Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 567.

[459] Käsemann, 268, rightly sees this aspect of δύναμις in Ex 9.16, although he ignores its saving aspect toward Israel: "δύναμις here is the power of the Creator in judgment."

[460] Käsemann, 268: "δύναμις and ὄνομα almost overlap, since the power manifested makes known the one who exerts it (Bietenhard, *TDNT* 5:277)."

[461] If our LXX rendering is the same as Paul would have had access to, then the apostle has substituted δύναμις for ἰσχύς, perhaps consciously (but see Cranfield, 486-87).

[462] Cf. E. E. Johnson, 148.

2.3.1.1. *Summary*

Concerning 9.14-18 we may now conclude that in light of the preceding context of God's electing purpose to which Paul continues to make reference (verses 16,18), his emphasis on God's freedom to show mercy to *whomsoever* He chooses (as demonstrated in verses 15-16 by the use and repetition of ὃς ἂν and by the primary inference Paul draws from Ex 33.19 that whether or not one receives mercy from God depends not on any human "willing or running," but only on the sovereign decision of God), his structural development of parallelism in these verses so as to emphasize God's determinative activity *both* in having mercy and in hardening, and his principal usage of "mercy" and "hardening" elsewhere (particularly in Romans) with reference to eschatological salvation and judgment, the apostle continues to affirm that the scope of divine election entails the determination of individuals to eternal destinies.

2.3.2. Romans 9.19-23

We have argued that from the very beginning of chapter 9 Paul showed his anxiety over the eternal destiny of many of his kinsmen according to the flesh. Due to their situation, Paul felt obligated to face the question of whether God's covenant promises of salvation had failed. His response entailed an understanding that not every individual Jew was a child of promise. God, according to His electing purpose, chose those to whom He wished to be merciful, and rejected the rest (cf. 11.7). In all this, Paul maintained, God remains righteous because He steadfastly pursues the glory of His name in freely dispensing His mercy or His hardening as He pleases. Thus the fundamental purpose of Paul's argument through verse 18 embraces the thought of God's eternal dealings with individuals.

We now turn to verses 19-23 to see whether this interpretation coheres with the material Paul presents there. In this climactic subsection, Paul anticipates one last objection to his argument that God acts righteously in His sovereign, electing activity (verses 19-20),[463] propounds a further justification to sustain his position (verse 21), and then offers his final insights into unconditional divine election (verses 22-23).

A cursory reading of this text (as with that of verses 14-18) would lead one to think that Paul has the destinies of individuals in mind as he considers God's right to determine the fate of His creation. There is no mention of nation groups and particularly no reference to Israel. Nevertheless, many commentators contend that Paul must be envisioning God's determinations towards nations with regard to their historical roles and earthly destinies. Two arguments are offered to support this view: 1) the OT texts Paul quotes to introduce his potter-clay metaphor in 9.20-21 refer in their original context to the nation of Israel and not to individuals; 2) the metaphor itself disallows the notion of individual, eternal condemnation because no earthly potter creates a vessel simply to destroy it.[464]

With regard to the first argument, it must be clearly stated that although many of the OT 'potter' passages contain similarities to the text in verse 20 (μὴ ἐρεῖ τὸ πλάσμα τῷ πλάσαντι, Τί με ἐποίησας οὕτως;),[465] Paul does not claim to be quoting any of them, and there are sufficient differences in wording and meaning to cast doubt on attempts to establish Pauline dependence on any of

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[463] As E. E. Johnson notes, 133: "At stake in his argument is not simply God's judgment -- on Israel or on anyone else -- but God's freedom to elect some and not others."

[464] Cranfield, 492 n2, argues this powerfully and succinctly: "It should be noted that εἰς ἀτιμίαν implies menial use, not reprobation or destruction. The potter does not make ordinary, everyday pots, merely in order to destroy them!"

[465] See Isa 29.16 (where the first six words of Paul's question mirror exactly Isaiah's phrasing); 45.9; Jer 18.6; Ps 2.9; Ecclus 27.5.

them. Those arguing the national/historical view have appealed to the potter/clay illustrations in Isa 45.9-11 and Jer 18.1-8 as determinative examples; since these texts refer indisputably to God's dealings with Israel as a nation, the conclusion inferred is that Paul most probably intends the same idea. But in Isa 29.16 (which of all OT texts lays claim to the closest verbal parallels with Rom 9.20b) the metaphor speaks of individuals (the spurious wise men misleading Israel -- verse 14) rather than of the nation of Israel as a whole. From OT usage alone, it seems evident that this metaphor is extremely versatile, capable of being molded to fit many different intentions.[466]

This conclusion is borne out by various passages in extra-biblical Jewish literature employing the potter metaphor. Wisdom of Solomon 15.7 offers a striking parallel to Rom 9.21 by its reference to a potter making from the same clay two sorts of vessels, one for clean, the other for contrary uses. However, the context of Wisd Sol 15 lacks any similarity to that of Rom 9 -- in the former, the potter represents the maker of idols who fashions a false god from the same clay with which he makes other vessels and then absurdly worships what he has created! On the other hand, Sirach 33.7-13 (which deals directly with God's determination of individual human destinies), though sharing no exact phrasing with Rom 9.20-21, reflects in arresting ways its same content. Both assert 1) that human beings all come from the same "material"; 2) that any differences to be found in people are thus due not to varied origins but to God who sovereignly differentiates and appoints; 3) that God blesses/exalts some and curses/brings low others, and the only reason given is that He is the potter and they the clay; and 4) God's decisions in this matter are according to His good

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[466] Cf. E. E. Johnson's discussion, 132-33. Piper, 176, concludes: "What is clear from the use of the potter/clay image in Is 29.16; 45.9-11 and Jer 18.1-7 is that it is a very flexible metaphor that can be used in various context to imply different things. It is futile therefore to appeal to any given usage of the image as proof of what Paul meant by it."

pleasure, i.e., free from any external considerations (like "willing or running"). Finally, as our study of election in the Dead Sea Scrolls showed, Qumran used the potter-clay metaphor to emphasize the sovereignty of the Creator God over the individual with regard to all spheres of life.[467] These close connections lend weight to the view that Paul also intends his use of the potter/clay illustration to be understood of individuals rather than nations.[468] The verb πλάσσω adds further support to this view. Its only other occurrence in the traditional Pauline corpus is in 1 Tim 2.13 where it refers to God's activity in creating Adam and Eve. Luz (239) argues on the basis of LXX usage that πλάσσω points to the action of God in creation.[469] It is most probable, then, that C. Müller is correct in concluding that by use of this language Paul shows he is thinking in Creator/creature terms.[470]

Thus we may deduce that there is no certain evidence that Paul has Israel as a nation in mind as he pens this question; indeed the general usage of πλάσσω and the strong theological parallels with Sir 33.7-13 and the thought of Qumran lead us rather to the more likely conclusion that Paul thinks here of the destiny of the individual creature molded according to God's own purposes.

But what of the objection that the potter-clay metaphor itself argues against the view that God elects some individuals to reprobation? For this

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[467] Cf. above, 99-101.

[468] For a more detailed treatment on this point, see Maier, 376, and Piper, 177-8. Maier (378) in particular argues for a close connection between Paul's predestinarian thought and that of Qumran (cf. 1QS 3.15-4.26; 11.10ff.).

[469] He also notes (238): "Die Verbindung des Schöpfungsgedankens mit dem Bild der Töpfers ist alt. Im A.T. geht sie auf Gn.2 zurück. Das Bild wird dann vor allem in der prophetischen Literatur seit Jeremia und Deuterojesaia aktuell: Jahwes Schöpfermacht zeigt sich in der Geschichte, deren souveräner Herr er ist." Cf. also Dunn, 556-57.

[470] C. Müller, 27: "Für den Abschnitt 9,19-21 ist eine Tradition längst nachgewiesen: Der Töpfer und seine Tätigkeit ist im AT und Spätjudentum geläufiges Bild für den Schöpfer. Die Frage V.20 (= Jes. 29,16) unterstreicht ebenso wie der erklärende Vers 21 (vgl. Sap. 15,7) die unbedingte Souveränität des Schöpfers gegenüber seinen Geschöpf. In gleiche Richtung weist das Wort ἐξουσία (V.21). Es meint die unumschränkte Herrschermacht des Schöpfers."

objection to carry genuine force, two suppositions must be granted: first, that

Paul intended **no substantial connection** between the pair of vessels mentioned

in verse 21 and the pair spoken of in verses 22-23; and second, that within the

framework of the metaphor, destruction must mean shattering (the annihilation

of the vessel); hence the objection that no potter makes pots simply to shatter

them. The first of these shall be dealt with further below and so we pass by at

present with no comment. As to the second, we note that ἀπώλεια does not

necessarily mean annihilation;[471] in the context of 9.23 Paul contrasts it with

eschatological δόξα. Hence, "destruction" is here not the opposite of simple

"existence" but of "glorious existence." Vessels of wrath, then, are not vessels

made simply to be shattered, but rather vessels prepared perhaps to house an

eternal, inglorious existence. Staying within the potter-clay metaphor, we note

that potters certainly may make vessels for the purpose of containing and con-

fining rubbish or rejected material (e.g., waste baskets, incinerators, spitoons).

On this understanding, the associations of σκεῦος in verse 21 with the occur-

rences in verses 22-23 would not strain the metaphor at all. The view remains

tenable that the scope of Paul's argument here deals with election of individuals

to eternal destinies.

There are 4 positive arguments from these verses which indicate that

Paul's concern is not primarily with nations and historical roles[472] but rather

with individuals and their eternal fortunes: 1) the objection of Paul's opponent

in verse 19 and the apostle's response in verses 20ff. are both formulated in

individualistic terms -- individual accountability before God is at stake in the

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[471] Oepke, *TDNT* 1:396, states that especially in Paul and John ἀπώλεια/ἀπόλλυσθαι refers to "definitive destruction, not merely in the sense of extinction of physical existence, but rather of an eternal plunge into Hades...."

[472] Contra, e.g., J. P. Martin, 307 n11.

eyes of the objector; 2) the image of vessels made from the same lump of clay

recalls Paul's example of the twins Jacob and Esau (verses 10-13) and thus

strongly suggests that he still has in mind the same issue of the unconditional

election of individuals first presented in verses 6-13; 3) the parallels between

verse 21 and what follows suggest that the image of vessels is continued and

applied in verses 22-23. 9.24 then makes it clear that 'vessels of mercy' refers

not to any nation but rather to those individuals chosen by God from both the

Jews and the Gentiles; and 4) the reference to destruction (ἀπώλεια) in verse 22

signifies an eternal condition rather than historical defeat or physical death. We

shall now look at these arguments in more detail.

    1) <u>The objection and response of verses 19-20 are both framed in terms</u>

<u>of individual responsibility</u>. In verse 18 Paul has powerfully summarized his

understanding of the sovereign rights of God to choose or reject individuals

according to His own "electing purpose", free from any external constraints. In

light of this seemingly stark position, Paul's opponent puts forward a final

objection: if hardness of heart is ultimately caused by God, not by human intent

or action, then God is unjust to condemn a person for that hardness. The objec-

tor understands clearly the implications of Paul's position. ἔτι indicates the

objector's recognition of Paul's claim that God sovereignly and unconditionally

hardens.[473] "Why does He *still* find fault?" implies a new level of awareness.

Since Paul does not propose the more easily acceptable position that God har-

dens in punishment for sin, the objector is incredulous. How can God be

righteous in inflicting punishment on individuals when He has already

determined their response?

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[473] The objector apparently grasps the force of Paul's argument more clearly than some
commentators. See, for example, Murray (II:29), who wants to view God's hardening of
Pharaoh as judicial in nature. "The hardening, it should be remembered, is of a judicial charac-
ter. It presupposes ill-desert and, in the case of Pharaoh, particularly the ill-desert of his self-
hardening."

Paul gives no hint of disagreement with his opponent's understanding of verse 18. Surely if the apostle felt he had been misunderstood at this critical point, he would have immediately set the record straight.[474] However, he accuses his opponent not of misrepresentation (indeed, he will go on in verses 20-23 to enhance his argument for the incontestable sovereignty of God's will), but rather of arrogance in presuming to know better than God how He should act.[475] Paul replies to the questions of verse 19 with his own rhetorical questions which attribute to God the same absolute control over human destinies as do verses 11-13, 16 and 18. μενοῦνγε is a compound particle employed particularly in answers to emphasize or rectify: "on the contrary" (BDF §450.4; BGD 503b). So, Sanday and Headlam (259) label it "a strong correction". The vocative ὦ ἄνθρωπε is not merely rhetorical (*pace* Barrett, 178: "my dear sir"), but intended to heighten the contrast between God and creature, thereby strengthening Paul's rebuke of those who presumptuously disparage the truth by refusing to accept humbly and with wonder the majestic sovereignty of God.[476] Supporting this contrast are the use of ὦ, which indicates a considerable depth of feeling,[477] the emphatic word order (ἄνθρωπε at the beginning and θεῷ at the

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[474] On this, cf. Augustine, *De Praedest. Sanct.*, cap. 8.

[475] Dodd (159) objects to this line of argument by Paul as unconvincing and demeaning to humanity. God has become, to Dodd's way of thinking, a non-moral despot. "But the trouble is that 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." But as we have seen from contemporary Jewish writings, and especially the Qumran literature, some Jewish groups apparently had little problem comprehending and embracing this perspective.

[476] The fact that Paul goes on (verses 21-23) to offer a rationale of God's purposes in the matter of divine election demonstrates that he is not opposed to probing for more truth. He rebukes his opponent not for seeking more truth, but for brashly rejecting what has already been demonstrated as true.

[477] Turner, 33, notes that in Koine Greek the use of ὦ has become rare (contrary to classical Greek). "In Luke and Paul it occurs with only four out of seventeen vocatives. There will therefore be some special reason for each occurrence in the NT." Though Turner sees "no great emotion" in 9.20, we would disagree, for the reasons given above.

end of the sentence as well as the emphatic use of the pronoun σύ), and the

participle ἀνταποκρινόμενος whose double compound form amplifies the

thought that such a human reply to God is contentious and insubordinate (so

Dunn, 556).[478]

As verse 20 indicates, Paul links the picture of a human being contend-

ing with God over His righteousness to that of a pot complaining to the potter

over its design and purpose. The context of individual responsibility (raised by

Paul's emphasis on God's absolute sovereignty) and the use of individualistic

language (τίς, ἄνθρωπε, σύ) point to the conclusion that also here the scope of

Paul's thought on election embraces individual, eternal destinies.

2) Ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φυράματος in verse 21 parallels ἐξ ἑνὸς κοίτην ἔχουσα

in verse 10. The force of this argument depends on whether we have

understood Paul's argument in verses 6-13 correctly. If so, then the parallel

between verses 10 and 21 would indicate that just as God fulfills His sovereign

electing purpose in calling one twin to salvation and rejecting the other with

nothing to distinguish them except His decision, so here God (as the divine pot-

ter) takes clay from the same lump and fashions vessels for beauty or for

ignominy based simply on His own purposes. The parallel strongly suggests

that εἰς τιμήν and εἰς ἀτιμίαν reflect in Paul's mind the destinies of Jacob and

Esau respectively, which as we have argued above[479] refer to salvation and con-

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[478] Käsemann, 269: "A human being cannot become God's accuser, for right is not a neutral norm for the creature but is given only by the Creator, whose own right is coincident with his creative freedom." Murray, II:31, writes: "The answer is the appeal to the reverential silence which the majesty of God demands of us." Cranfield, 490, is mistaken in supposing Paul to mean that mankind is forced to silence because of God's ultimate mercy ("It is because, whether one is Moses or Pharaoh, member of the believing Church or member of still unbelieving Israel, one is this man [one for whom Christ died and for whose justification Christ was raised -- appealing to Rom 5.12-21], the object of God's mercy, that one has no right to answer God back.") Man stands here in 9.20b-23 as the creature wholly dependent on the will of the sovereign God who glorifies His name in His electing purpose by means of either mercy or hardening.

[479] Cf. above, 140-52.

demnation.

3) The continuation from verse 21 of the "vessel" imagery in verses 22-23 adds further confirmation that Paul is thinking of individuals and eternal destinies, not nations and historical roles. Verses 22-23 are inextricably linked both in structure and content. With them Paul draws his final conclusions in this chapter on the subject of God's purposes expressed through unconditional election, and prepares for a concrete application of them in 9.24ff. As a unit, they raise a number of important exegetical questions.[480] But our concern in this present investigation focuses on the relationship of σκεύη in 9.22-23 with σκεῦος in 9.21 -- should σκεύη ὀργῆς and σκεύη ἐλέους (= vessels [made for] wrath and mercy, respectively)[481] be identified with those of verse 21: i.e., vessels of wrath = the vessel for dishonor; vessels of mercy = the vessel for honor? Cranfield opposes such an identification, arguing that 1) if Paul had wanted to make such a connection he should have prefaced σκεύη ὀργῆς and σκεύη ἐλέους with definite articles;[482] and 2) that the particle δέ which connects verses 22-24 with verse 21 indicates "...an element of opposition and implies that he [Paul] regards his illustration as inadequate."[483] He concludes: "σκεῦος is used in vv.22 and 23 metaphorically (cf. Bauer, s.v. 2) probably -- in our

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[480] E.g., 1) what are the logical relationships among the three clauses of verses 22-23; 2) how is it that God endures "with much patience" the vessels prepared for destruction; 3) why does Paul write in the passive voice concerning the preparation of the vessels of wrath for destruction but in the active voice for the preparation of the vessels of mercy for glory, if God is the actor in both cases; and 4) how do the purpose clauses in these verses finally answer the objection raised in 9.19 concerning the justice of God's unconditional and sovereign election?

[481] Zerwick, #40.

[482] Cranfield, 495 n4.

[483] Ibid., 493. According to Cranfield, if Paul had wanted to indicate a direct connection with the potter imagery of verse 21, he would have used οὖν or ἄρα. So, concerning verses 22-24, he concludes: "What follows does indeed draw out the point of v. 21, but, in doing so, it also brings out the fact that God's ways are not just like the potter's."

view -- without any special thought of the literal use of the word in v. 21."[484]

But neither of these linguistic arguments carries the weight which it initially suggests. Concerning the first, we may grant with Cranfield that the use of a definite article with σκεύη in verses 22-23 would have undeniably confirmed the identification of usages in verses 21 and 22ff. But it does not follow from this that the lack of definite article in and of itself demonstrates that Paul uses σκεύη "without any special thought of the literal use of the word in v. 21." There are no rigid grammatical rules in Koine Greek which require such a usage of the definite article when constructing a metaphor and drawing applications from it. Further, even in situations where a noun is to be understood as definite, its article is often omitted (particularly when the underlying style of thought is Semitic) if the noun has a genitive modifier (cf. BDF §259; Rom 2.5; Phil 1.6; 4.3; 1 Cor 2.16; 10.21).[485] Thus, the fact that we find no definite articles for the two usages of σκεύη in verses 22-23 can be explained on other than theological grounds. And finally, in light of their remarkably close proximity and similarity of context, one must ask whether it is really reasonable to believe that Paul did not intend his readers to catch the seemingly obvious parallels between σκεῦος in verse 21 and σκεύη in verses 22-23.[486] If Paul *had*

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[484] Ibid. Cranfield's desire to divorce the meaning of σκεῦος in verses 22-23 from any close associations with that in verse 21 seems particularly odd in light of his identification of the meaning of μακροθυμία in 9.22 with its usage 7 chapters earlier in Romans 2.4 (cf. 495).

[485] Morris (368) postulates concerning σκεύη ὀργῆς that the absence of definite article might point to a qualitative understanding of the noun, i.e., vessels "characterized by wrath". Thus he argues that these are people whose lives are characterized by wrath, not that they are destined for wrath. However, this qualitative sense loses focus when applied to the parallel phrase "vessels of mercy", which then would refer to people who are characterized by mercy, not who are destined for mercy. In light of Paul's emphasis throughout on the sovereign activity of God, and particulary in light of Paul's strong purposive language both within the potter metaphor and its subsequent application, the genitive modifiers for σκεύη in verses 22-23 should be seen as indicating ultimate purpose or direction.

[486] Even A. T. Hanson ("Vessels of Wrath," 439), who is sympathetic towards Cranfield's approach, notes concerning the latter's denial of a direct parallel that "...it is very difficult not to make this equation and in fact most commentators do so implicitly if not explicitly."

wanted to emphasize the distinction between God's activity and that of the potter in the earlier metaphor, he certainly could have made this clear by using terms different from those central to the metaphor or by highlighting the content of the particular contrast he intended to make. But these things he does not do.

What of Paul's use of δέ to introduce verses 22-23? Does this not show the element of contrast which Cranfield envisions? Cranfield is indeed correct that this particle is used most commonly to indicate some degree of contrast with what precedes (cf. Bauer, s.v.), but as many grammars point out, δέ is capable of and often employed with a wide range of meanings: at times it can simply introduce a paragraph (cf. Moulton III, 331), act as a simple connective indistinguishable from καί, or finally, introduce a further explanation or intensification (BDF §447(8); Zerwick §467; Dana and Mantey, 244) -- "indeed, moreover, now". The last two possibilities would both suit the context of thought in Romans 9.19ff. -- verses 22-23 serve as an explanation, perhaps even intensification of the potter-clay metaphor which Paul introduces to explain God's absolute right over His creatures to fashion and destine them according to His sovereign purposes. The fact that elsewhere in Paul's use of metaphors he employs δέ in precisely this explanatory way (cf. Gal 3.16; 4.1,5,6,25,28; 1 Cor 10.4,11; 12.27) supports our case that here in 9.21-23 Paul intends no contrast between the use of σκεῦος in verse 21 and subsequently in verses 22-23. Further, since Paul's dialogical style to this point in chapter 9 has uniformly involved building on the conclusions he has just reached rather than detracting from their force or bypassing their primary features, it would seem very peculiar for the apostle now at the climax of his argument to change his style and introduce in his conclusion a softening element which clashes with the overall direction of his argument. Therefore, we may conclude from the Creator-creature imagery of verse 21 and its preceding context[487] that in verses 22ff.

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[487] Cf. above, 166-73.

Paul carries over this imagery by his repetition of σκεῦος, intending an identification between the vessels spoken of there with those mentioned in verse 21. "Vessels of wrath prepared for destruction" should be understood as those individuals whom God has predestined[488] for eternal damnation, and "vessels of mercy" as those individuals predestined by God to everlasting glory.

This is unequivocally confirmed by Paul's concrete application in 9.24 of the general principle he has just outlined in verses 22-23. After speaking of

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[488] Elsewhere in Paul (and indeed the whole NT) καταρτίζω has the positive meaning "to repair, restore, fit together, prepare, complete, equip" (cf. 1 Cor 1.10; 2 Cor 13.11; Gal 6.1; 1 Thess 3.10; also Heb 11.3). Delling (*TDNT* 1:476) gives it the meaning here "foreordained (to destruction)." But this perhaps already assumes a direct contrast with προητοίμασεν which may be premature. Dunn, 559-60, and Cranfield, 495-6, oppose a double predestination view here which takes κατηρτισμένα as a counterbalance to προητοίμασεν. They argue that Paul had intended this he would probably have used the double compound verb προκαταρτίζω (found for example in 2 Cor 9.5). But the force of this objection is removed when it is remembered that within the context of Romans 9 (especially verses 18ff.) Paul has already spoken of God's sovereign purpose to harden and reject, and that καταρτίζω can have the meaning "to create, establish" and when used with the perfect tense would naturally refer to the purpose and intent of the actor, or at least the intended role of the object created. In light of Paul's continuance of the potter/clay metaphor, the meaning "created, prepared" fits best.

The key question then becomes: who is the author of this activity?. Four answers have been proposed: a) It is God (Michel; Käsemann; Luz; Maier; Piper; Dunn); b) it is the vessels themselves who bring this judgment upon themselves (paralleling Rom 1.18-32) -- the voice of the verb is seen as middle, not passive; c) Paul never intended to imply who did the preparing -- the participle is viewed adjectivally as "fit for destruction" (SH; Schlier; Cranfield); d) it is a mystery which cannot be known -- the passive is meant to point to a reality no human wisdom can penetrate.

In the context of Romans 9, where human self-determination is nowhere mentioned *or even implied* (and especially within the potter/clay analogy), answer b) is least likely. Answers c) and d) are similar in that they both argue that Paul did not intend to clarify the source of the action [c) contends that it was not important to Paul's argument so he ignored it; d) says Paul himself did not know]. But Paul has been very clear in his argument from 9.1 up to now about God's agency in hardening and rejecting as well as in showing mercy -- answer d) flies in the face of the entire preceding context. And in light of verses 13, 18 and 21, answer c) does as well -- Paul's repetition of God's determinative activity throughout this chapter seems to indicate his dominant concern that God's decisions should be seen as determinative to human destiny. And after having been so clear, why would he now seek to ignore or conceal God's determinative role? Thus, we may conclude that the most natural suggestion is a) -- God, the divine potter has created/ prepared the vessels of wrath for destruction.

Further support for this view comes from extra-biblical parallels with the double-predestination passages of Qumran (1QH 15.12-22; 1QS 3.15-17; 11.10-11) whose thought closely compares with Paul in this area. On this, cf. above, 76-87; also Maier, 381ff.; Piper, 194-95.

the vessels of mercy in verse 23, Paul immediately identifies himself and his

readers as belonging to that category: οὓς καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς οὐ μόνον ἐξ

Ἰουδαίων ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξ ἐθνῶν. We note here that Paul does speak of ethnic

entities -- Jews and Gentiles -- but not for the purpose of identifying these cor-

porate groups *in toto* with either the vessels of wrath or vessels of mercy. On

the contrary, as the preposition ἐκ clearly demonstrates, Paul conceives of the

vessels of mercy (and by analogy the vessels of wrath) as composed of *individu-

als* chosen from both the Jewish nation and the Gentile world.

4)΄Απώλεια in verse 22 signifies eternal lostness, not historical defeat or

death. Though rare in secular Greek, ἀπώλεια is capable of having four mean-

ings: a) destruction, ruin; b) loss; c) perishing; and d) lostness.[489] In the LXX,

the most common meaning is b). In the NT, however, this range of meanings

coalesces into two main groups: destruction in the sense of being wasted or

ruined (Mt 26.8; Mk 14.4) and destruction in the sense of eternal lostness (Mt

7.13; Phil 1.28; 3.19; 1 Tim 6.9; Heb 10.39; 2 Pet 2.1,3; 3.7,16; Rev

17.8,11).[490] There can be little doubt that ἀπώλεια in 9.22 reflects this latter

meaning of eschatological destruction,[491] for Paul consciously contrasts it with

"glory" in verse 23 where δόξα undoubtedly refers to the eschatological

splendor of the final consummation of creation (cf. 8.17,18,21,30).[492]

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[489] Oepke, *TDNT* 1:396.

[490] Cf. Bauer, s.v., where the distinction is made between the destruction one causes
and the destruction one experiences. In the latter case, there are a few passages capable of refer-
ring simply to earthly ruin or physical death (cf. John 17.12; Acts 8.20), but the tendency in the
NT is to use ἀπώλεια in its eschatological sense.

[491] Cf. Morris, 368, who recognizes that although Paul does not describe this "destruc-
tion," it clearly stands for ultimate loss. Käsemann, 271, declares that Paul's perspective is
apocalyptic. Cf. also Pallis, 117; Munck, 66ff.; Räisänen, 2904; Piper, 182, Dunn, 559.

[492] SH, 266, write: "...the use of the words εἰς δόξαν, εἰς ἀπώλειαν prove con-
clusively that he is looking as much as he ever does to the final end and destination of man. To
limit them thus [to a purely earthly destination as Beyschlag does] entirely deprives the passage
of any adequate meaning."

2.3.2.1. *Summary*

Following his declaration that many of his contemporary kinsmen stand in a state of eternal condemnation before God (9.1-5), and his subsequent argument that God's salvific promises have not failed because they apply only to the elect and God is free from any external constraints (merit due to birth or works) in choosing or rejecting individuals to receive mercy or wrath, Paul now rises to defend his position against the charge that such divine activity would make God unjust. In appealing to Ex 33.19 and 9.16, Paul argues that God's righteousness consists in His single-minded commitment to act in the interests of His name and glory, and that God's glory consists largely in His freedom to show mercy (but also wrath) to whomever He chooses, apart from any human distinctives or constraints outside Himself. That the scope of divine election here entails an understanding of individuals being chosen to eternal destinies is demonstrated by the following points which were defended above: 1) Since the content of verses 14-18 closely parallels that of verses 11ff., and since verses 14ff. are formulated in response to a question arising from the argument of verses 6-13, the scope of election in what follows must be the same as that which initiated the discussion -- thus if, as we argued above, 9.6-13 represents divine election in terms of individual, eternal destinies, then 9.14ff. must contain the same focus; 2) The emphasis on God's freedom to show mercy to *whomsoever* He so chooses is demonstrated in verses 15-16 by the use and repetition of ὃς ἄν and by the primary inference Paul draws from Ex 33.19 that whether or not one receives mercy from God depends not on any human "willing or running," but only on the sovereign decision of God; 3) Paul's principal usage of "mercy" and "hardening" elsewhere (particularly in Romans) refers directly to eschatological salvation and judgment; 4) the opponent's objection and Paul's response in verses 19ff. are both framed in terms of individual

responsibility; 5) the parallel of ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φυράματος in verse 21 with ἐξ

ἑνὸς κοίτην ἔχουσα in verse 10 indicates that God's sovereign, electing purpose

as manifested in the case of Jacob and Esau continues to play a central role in

Paul's potter-clay metaphor; 6) the apostle's identification of σκεῦος in verse 21

and verses 22-23 and his concrete application in verse 24 (οὐ μόνον ἐξ 'Ιουδαίων

ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξ ἐθνῶν) demonstrates in the climactic section of his whole argument

that the issues of election of individuals to eternal salvation and perdition are at

the heart of Paul's thought; and 7) ἀπώλεια, linked as it is antithetically to

δόξα, refers to eschatological, inglorious existence, not merely to historical

destruction or ruin.

Therefore we conclude that Romans 9.14-23 argues from the perspective

that God's righteousness necessarily entails His freedom in the soteriological

arena to choose or reject according to His own purposes, independent of any

external considerations, and that Paul thus employs a concept of divine election

quite similar to that of Qumran, focusing on the eternal destiny of individuals

rather than on that of people groups.

2.4. Romans 9.24-29

With the introduction of verse 24 Paul returns to the level of argument at

which he began in verses 6-8 that not all members of ethnic Israel are the elect

children of God, but only those whom God in His freedom has chosen. But

added to this thought is a new twist -- the true people of God (= the vessels of

mercy) consists not only of those chosen out of the mass of Israel but also out of

the Gentile world. The catena of OT quotations in verses 25-29 serve to sup-

port the two central thoughts of verse 24: 1) God has predestined some from

among the Gentiles to be His children (verses 25-26); 2) not all contemporary

Israel but certainly a remnant from among them has also been predestined to be

saved (verses 27-29).

We have previously discussed[493] the crucial function of the preposition
ἐκ in 9.24 as it relates to the phrase "vessels of mercy". Only two other items of
note from these verses concern us in our investigation: 1) the use of καλεῖν in
verse 24 and its threefold echo in the Hosea quotations of verses 25-26; and 2)
Paul's radical emphasis on the fact that **only** a remnant of ethnic Israel has been
spared at present.

1) Καλεῖν, one of the key words in Romans 9 (cf. verses 6 and 11, as
well as 24-26), proves a central motif for Paul's entire argument. As we noted
in our discussion of its sense in verse 11,[494] καλεῖν with God as its subject
ordinarily means "to designate, to call effectually " and refers to the divine
activity of leading the recipient into full salvation. Its uses in verses 24ff. form
no exception, as is made abundantly clear by the redemptive, eschatological
context of verses 22-23. This is further elucidated by the close parallels in
thought between verses 23-24 and 8.30, the so-called 'golden chain of salva-
tion'. Both speak clearly of individuals being predestined and effectually called
to participate in the final consummation of glory.

2) Paul employs two quotations from Isaiah to drive home his two-fold
point: only a relatively small number of Jews is presently being saved out of the
mass of Israel (note the contrast intended between the originally large **number**
of ethnic Israelites like "the sand of the sea" and the fact that **only**[495] a remnant
will be saved),[496] and in Paul's mind this is not something which should surprise

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[493] Cf. above, 176-77.

[494] Cf. above, 148.

[495] Aageson ("Typology," 57) correctly concludes, "The remnant imagery in 9.27-28 is
intended as a sign that God has placed Israel under judgment."

[496] Contra Gaston ("Israel's Enemies," 416), who wants to maintain that Paul uses
these quotations positively to support the notion that God will never abandon His people.
Refoulé ("...et ainsi", 149) correctly concludes, "La citation d'Isaïe en 9,27 souligne simple-
ment le contraste entre la multitude du peuple et le petit nombre des sauvés."

us -- it was predicted by Isaiah.[497] That the Lord is the one behind this win-
nowing of Israel according to Isa 10.22 serves to undergird once again Paul's
emphasis regarding the sovereign choice of God in the destiny of those con-
stituting Israel.[498]

Thus, verses 24-29 as a whole serve Paul's argument by emphasizing in
a summary way that God's sovereign, electing activity issues in a compelling
call to individuals from the ranks of both the Jews and Gentiles which in turn
results in their eschatological salvation. Here, too, Paul makes clear within his
argument that the scope of God's election entails the determination of individu-
als to their respective eternal destinies.

3. Summary: Election in Romans 9.1-29

In this investigation we have focused on the scope of God's electing
activity in this first major section of Romans 9-11. We have concluded through
a study of each of its subsections (9.1-5, 6-13, 14-23, 24-29) that the apostle
Paul wrestled with question of the eternal destiny of his fellow Jews who had
rejected Christ, and throughout his argument this issue stands close to the sur-
face. Paul's use of the concept of divine election, in necessarily dealing with
the ultimate fate of individuals who presently were ἀνάθεμα to God, provides
an initial answer as to how God can be considered faithful to the redemptive
promises He has made to Israel. He concludes that these promises apply only to
the elect, to the vessels of mercy sovereignly predestined by God to eschatologi-

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[497] Paul's introductory formula in verse 29, καὶ καθὼς προείρηκεν ᾿Ησαίας, indicates
his view that Isaiah's words were a prophetic insight to Israel's present-day situation. Cf.
Guerra, 231.

[498] Aageson ("Typology," 57) notes concerning 9.25-29: "The remnant
imagery...serves to make a distinction between Israel as the whole people of God and that group
within Israel which will be saved."

cal glory, and that these "vessels" comprise individuals divinely chosen from among not only the Jews but also the Gentiles.[499]

If Paul had chosen to end his argument here, one would be forced to conclude that the apostle did not entertain any hope that God would one day include "all Israel" (11.26) in the elect company of the redeemed.[500] But as we shall see in our study of Romans 11, the argument of 9.1-29 serves as an initial step in Paul's defense concerning God's faithfulness to His redemptive promises to Israel. The climax of Paul's thought concerning this pivotal question (9.6a) is to be found in chapter 11, and it will be our task to discover whether our interpretation of the scope of election in 9.1-29 and the conclusions to be drawn from that cohere with what Paul ultimately reveals in 11.25ff.

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[499] Watson (277 n9) is therefore correct in concluding that in 9.1-29 Paul denies the Jews *as an ethnic people* were ever elected to salvation.

[500] So Hübner, 57; Refoulé, 59. Paul has argued in verses 6ff. that not all physical Israel is real Israel, in verses 22-24 that only some from contemporary Israel are "vessels of mercy" destined for glory, and in verses 27-29, using quotes from Isaiah, that only a remnant of Israel would be saved from the wrath of God.

Chapter 5: Paul's Understanding of Election in Romans 11

1. Introduction

We have previously remarked that in Romans 9-11 one must take care to consider the nuances of meaning in the central terms which shed light on Paul's understanding of election.[501] Nowhere is this truer than in Romans 11. Because of a lack of precision in definition of terms, the debate over major issues in this chapter of Paul's letter has often become clouded and less than helpful. Some of this lack of precision is due perhaps to Paul himself, but to a large degree the theological murkiness here rests with interpreters who make blanket assumptions concerning these central, yet widely-nuanced terms. As we proceed with our study of this section, we will attempt to define as carefully as the evidence allows what Paul means by the terms and images associated with the concept of election in the hope that this will shed helpful light on Paul's understanding of Israel's election in Romans 9-11.

1.1. Setting the Context: Romans 9.1-10.21

Since there is little doubt that Romans 9-11 form a literary and theological unity arguing to support Paul's claim in 9.6a that "the word of God has not failed," we should recapitulate Paul's argument thus far so as to set chapter 11 in its proper relation to the rest of this section.

In 9.1-29, Paul reveals both the scope and agenda of his argument. His focus in chapter 8 on the Christian hope of eternal life and its basis in God's

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[501] Cf. above, 127-28.

faithfulness (8.20, 28f., 31ff.) has compelled him to consider the question of the salvation of Israel, in light of her rejection of Jesus Christ. Paul's bold declaration is that in spite of the present fact of Israel's hardheartedness and her anathema status, God has not failed to keep His salvific promises to Israel. But in the present circumstances, 'Israel' must be defined carefully, for not all from ethnic Israel comprise this true Israel, which is the recipient of His saving grace. Only the Israel 'of promise' has been called and redeemed by God, not the Israel of merely physical descent (9.6b-13), and God is the one who freely chooses those belonging to the Israel of promise. In this way, Paul highlights God's sovereign freedom in electing some to eternal life and others to destruction.

This raises the question of God's own righteousness (9.14), which Paul proceeds to defend in verses 15-23. The examples of Moses and Pharaoh indicate that God remains righteous only as He continues in His single-minded commitment to uphold the honor of His name and display His glory. According to Paul, this occurs in the fullest sense as God dispenses (or withholds) mercy according to His sovereign will and pleasure. Verses 24-29 return to the theme that the Church, composed primarily of Gentiles and the relatively small Jewish remnant, constitutes those presently enjoying the blessing of Messianic salvation. By means of a catena of passages from the prophets, Paul rechristens Gentile Christians in terms of the 'My people' of Hosea 2.23, and depicts contemporary, unbelieving Israel as recipients of God's sentence of wrath which will destroy all but a sparse few of the sons of Jacob.

The second major division of Romans 9-11, 9.30-10.21, serves to demonstrate how God's predestining and electing work among the Jews has worked itself out in Paul's contemporary setting with regard to the gospel.[502]

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[502] So C. Müller, 33; Munck, 77-78; Maier, 383-4. Maier in particular points to a parallel with Qumran literature in which the doctrine of predestination can coexist in the same

Although the pressing problem which Paul addresses is Israel's unbelief in the face of the gospel, nevertheless from the evidence of chapter 9 it is clear the apostle presumes that behind the scenes God is shaping and directing this behavior according to His electing purpose. Though Paul describes Israel's behavior, he does not proceed from this to highlight her guilt.[503] Instead, this state of affairs serves to demonstrate the efficacy of the hardening God has brought upon ethnic Israel. This is particularly clear in 9.30-33, which acts as a bridge between 9.1-29 and the main section of the second division, 10.1-21.[504] By means of the introductory formula, Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν, Paul deduces from the preceding chapter (particularly 9.24-29) that as a result of God's call, Gentiles have attained righteousness without zealously striving after it, while Israel, though zealous with effort, has failed to attain true righteousness due to God's hardening judgment (9.27-29). Further, by repeated use of διώκειν (verses 30-31, 32 [supplied for the ellipsis]), Paul draws our attention back to his axiomatic statement in 9.16 that "It [i.e., salvation ultimately] depends not on man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy."[505] Michel therefore is justified

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document with statements oriented towards free-will. The Qumran community, rather than seeing the predestination of God and the free choice of man related to each other on the same level, i.e., predestination *as well as* free will, thereby presenting a paradoxical or dialectical relationship, views predestination as primary, and the human will as subordinate (cf. our section above on election and free will at Qumran, 108-112). Maier (384-5) argues that in like fashion, Romans 9.30-10.21 stands not alongside 9.1-29 but under it. Paul's thought continues to show an Essene-like character.

[503] Munck, 77-78, observes: "The description that follows in 9:30-10:21 does not analyze the responsibility and guilt of the Jews. It merely catches us up on details of what has happened to the Jews, details not supplied us at the beginning of chapter 9....The Jews' disobedience and unbelief are mentioned, but without emphasis -- merely as a fact."

[504] According to Michel (218), 9.30-33 acts both as a summary of the divine freedom to have mercy and to harden highlighted in 9.1-29 and an introduction to the outworking of that divine freedom particularly with regard to hardened Israel in 10.1-21.

[505] Though 9.16 differs in vocabulary (θέλειν, τρέχειν) from 9.30-31 (διώκειν), in both contexts the same ardent, goal-directed striving is pictured. These verbs are all very closely related conceptually.

in declaring: "Die eigentliche Entscheidung fällt in Gottes Erbarmen, nicht im

'Willen' oder 'Laufen' des Menschen."[506] In verse 32, Israel's stumbling is

credited to the activity of God who places (τίθημι) the λίθον προσκόμματος καὶ

πέτραν σκανδάλου. The insertion of τίθημι into the LXX text (probably by

Paul himself) highlights the sovereign freedom of God and gives this quotation a

predestinarian slant.[507] Finally, in 10.2-4 Paul characterizes Israel as being

ἀγνοοῦντες and having a zeal for God ἀλλ᾽ οὐ κατ᾽ ἐπίγνωσιν. This lack of

enlightenment, or ignorance of the righteousness of God, is the principal cause

of Israel's rejection of her Messiah.[508] That this is not due to a lack of informa-

tion is clear from 10.18-19, which reflects Paul's conviction that the gospel has

been fully proclaimed to unbelieving Israel: she has both heard and *understood*.

Israel's ignorance, thus, is characterized by a willful rejection of the truth. She

understands the message of the gospel but refuses to acknowledge its validity for

her. It is almost certain, on the basis of what Paul has already argued in 9.1-

33, that Paul would naturally connect this lack of enlightenment with God's

predestining, hardening activity. There is warrant for this link between

predestination and spiritual insight in Jewish Wisdom tradition generally and in

Qumran literature specifically,[509] as well as hints in Paul's own writings else-

where.[510]

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[506] Michel, 219.

[507] So Michel, 220; Müller, 36-38; Maier, 387. Müller, 37, connects the σκάνδαλον-concept of verse 32 very closely with the earlier teaching of chapter 9: "...Paulus die Tradition nicht ohne Rücksicht auf Kap. 9 expliziert. Zumal der σκάνδαλον-Begriff, der göttliche Präedestination und menschliche Verantwortlichkeit umfaßt, verbindet Kap. 9 und 10 zu fester Einheit. Röm 10 gehört mit zur paulinischen 'Prädestinationslehre'...."

[508] So Munck, 81-2; Maier, 388.

[509] Cf. above, 79-83. Also Maier, 60-83; 158-163; 165-205; 222-263.

[510] In 2 Cor 4.6 Paul acknowledges that it is God's initiatory activity which brings illu-mination into the hearts of those formerly blinded and lost in darkness. 1 Cor 2.10ff. demonstrates Paul's conviction that illumination of the truth comes about only for those God makes receptive. Cf. also Gal 1.15.

Romans 9.30-10.21, then, primarily serves to explicate on the historical

level what God has foreordained on the supra-historical level. In this second

division, Paul demonstrates how the divine hardening is affecting contemporary

Israel, and hints that such a lamentable condition will not be the nation's fate

forever.

1.2. Romans 11.1-32: An Overview

After having highlighted God's sovereign, electing freedom in Romans 9

with regard to His promises toward Israel, and describing graphically in chapter

10 the consequences of the divine hardening for present-day Israel, Paul is

poised to address in a final way the question of God's faithfulness to Israel.

Hence, 11.1 picks up this central theme once again with the leading question,

'Has God then really rejected His people?' The remainder of this chapter forms

a series of arguments by which Paul demonstrates his conviction that Israel's

rejection is neither total nor permanent. In verses 1-10 the apostle essentially

reviews ground already covered by appealing to a divine election of the remnant

and a hardening of the rest of Israel. Verses 11-24 see Paul shifting his vision

back and forth between contemporary, hardened Israel and future, redeemed

Israel. Here Paul makes clear that in spite of Israel's present condition, God

views the nation in terms of His promises to the patriarchs and thus her positive

destiny is assured. Though this brings no assurance that the present mass of

unbelieving Israel will be saved, it leads Paul to the disclosure of a mystery:

Israel's hardening will continue until the Gentile mission is fulfilled, and then

all Israel will be saved. In verses 25-32, Paul unfolds the elements of this

revelation, cites supporting witnesses from the prophets, appeals to the con-

tinuity of Israel's election for the sake of the patriarchs and because of the faithful nature of God, and finally concludes that God's purposes for both Jews and Gentiles are shaped by mercy: the people of God are hardened in disobedience so that they may have no means of escape except through God's mercy. By means of this climactic conclusion, Paul substantiates beyond doubt his opening claim in 9.6a that the word of God has not failed -- God remains true to His purposes, which include the exercise of saving mercy toward ethnic Israel in the future. And this sovereign plan and ultimate mercy of God toward His people leads Paul to burst forth in a final paean of praise over the wisdom and glory of God (verses 33-36).

2. Election in Romans 11.1-10

In this opening subsection,[511] Paul once again picks up the theme of the election of Israel. After having demonstrated that the majority of ethnic Israel refused to submit to God's righteousness (10.3) even though the gospel was clearly proclaimed to her (10.16-19), Paul in verse 1 baldly frames the heretofore unspoken question: Λέγω οὖν, μὴ ἀπώσατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ. This is tantamount to asking: "Is God's election of Israel transitory?"[512] As οὖν makes clear, the content of this question is forced by the thrust of 10.14-21.[513] But even more it arises out of everything Paul has argued from 9.1 to this point -- his underlying theme remains the question of God's faithfulness to His prom-

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[511] Concerning the formal structure of Romans 11, cf. Stowers, 121f.

[512] Cranfield, 543, rephrases the question as "Has God broken His explicit promise not to cast off His people?"

[513] Meyer, 199, notes that λέγω οὖν in 11.1 builds inferentially on the two occurrences of ἀλλὰ λέγω in 10.18,19 (but cf. SH, 309, who reject a parallel with 10.18,19 due to the change of particle). If Israel has heard the gospel, if she has understood it and still remained disobedient and contrary (11.21), then does this not indicate that God has finally rejected her?

ises toward Israel. It certainly seems as if God has deprived Israel of her hope

and gathered the Gentiles to Himself in her place. But Paul immediately moves

to quash this untruth. By wording his question with μή, Paul signals his denial

even as he poses the question. God has not forgotten his covenant with

Abraham or repudiated Israel's privileges. He has not rejected His people. But

how does Paul intend ἀπώσατο to be understood? And who exactly are "His

people" in this context?

The apostle's choice of wording in this question and response (cf. verse

2) is not arbitrary or indiscriminate. Rather it mirrors exactly the twice-

repeated[514] divine promise in the Old Testament (LXX: 1 Sam 12.22; Ps

93.14): οὐκ ἀπώσεται κύριος τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ. The context of 1 Sam 12.22 is

particularly relevant, for the promise[515] is made *after* Israel has rejected God as

her king. It takes little imagination to see the link with the Israel of Romans 9-

10 who has rejected her Messiah sent by God.[516] If God's gracious promise

could be given after Israel's rejection of God in Samuel's day, Paul feels able to

affirm it again in spite of Israel's present intransigence.[517] By changing the

tense of the verb from the future ἀπώσεται in the Old Testament promise to the

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[514] Or thrice-repeated, if the variant reading of Ps 94.4 is to be accepted.

[515] Note that this promise is finds its foundation and certainty in the name of God and His electing pleasure: διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ τὸ μέγα, ὅτι ἐπιεικέως κύριος προσελάβετο ὑμᾶς αὐτῷ εἰς λαόν (LXX 12.22b). God will not reject His people because He has freely bound up the glory of His name with the nation of Israel. Although Paul does not here draw out any parallels with his argument in chapter 9, the context of this Old Testament quote fits in very well with his central emphases in 9.6-18.

[516] The parallel becomes even stronger if, as we think likely, Paul affirms the divinity of Christ in 9.5. See Cranfield, *in loc.*, for a comprehensive summary of the arguments over the wording of 9.5.

[517] It is instructive, however, to note that after the promise is made in 1 Sam 12.22, the prophet Samuel ends his discourse with a severe warning: "But if you still do wickedly, you will be swept away, both you and your king" (12.25). God's election of the nation of Israel does not necessarily entail the blessing and care of God for every Israelite or every generation of Israelites.

aorist ἀπώσατο in his "solemn and explicit denial"[518] found in 11.2, Paul

asserts that the divine promise has been confirmed even in the present circum-

stances.

Thus in light of this Old Testament background, μὴ ἀπώσατο τὸν λαὸν

αὐτοῦ in verse 1 (and its slightly modified echo in verse 2) must point to the

overarching election of ethnic Israel, in spite of her present fallenness. Israel is

only provisionally[519] rejected -- as a people group, the mass of Israel is pre-

sently outside of the redemption found in Christ -- but in the end her election

will once again be manifested and confirmed. Paul will go on to spell this out

this conclusion more fully in the remainder of the chapter. Thus, Cranfield is

right in his assessment that the theme of chapter 11 as a whole is stated categori-

cally in verse 2a -- "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew."[520]

There is no doubt that in 11.1 τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ refers to the ethnic people

of Israel as a whole.[521] The immediate context of 10.18-21 speaks of ethnic

Israel and her failure to respond to the gospel and indeed a major concern of

Paul's whole argument to this point has been the fate of the Old Testament

people of God.

In verse 2, τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ occurs again, now in Paul's emphatic denial.

But here the term is defined further by the relative clause ὃν προέγνω. Does

Paul mean something different by "His people" in this verse because of the

qualifying clause? Some exegetes have thought so,[522] ascribing to ὃν προέγνω a

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[518] Cranfield, 545.

[519] Cf. Meyer, 200.

[520] Cranfield, 542.

[521] *Pace* Refoulé ("Cohérence," 69-70).

[522] Cf., e.g., Davidson, 14.

limiting function which then provides a rather smooth parallel with 9.6-13.

"His people whom He foreknew" in this sense would denote "spiritual Israel",

only those chosen in advance by God from the larger rejected mass, i.e., in

essence the remnant (so Origen, Augustine, Chrysostom, Calvin, Luther). In

favor of this view is the fact that the succeeding context (verses 4-7) goes on to

distinguish the remnant from the rest of the Jewish people. But decisive against

this is the fact that τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ in verse 1 clearly identifies ethnic Israel as a

whole, and it would be unnatural in light of the close parallels between verses 1

and 2 for τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ in verse 2 to mean something different.[523] Further, it

would be of no help to Paul's argument at this point to reaffirm God's gracious

intent towards the remnant. As the context clearly shows, at issue is the fate of

unbelieving Israel. Paul's inferential question (11.1) only carries power if it

concerns present, unbelieving Israel. It is only this mass of God's people which

could potentially be described as "rejected by God." It is to this issue Paul

turns in Romans 11,[524] bringing a series of arguments to bear in support of his

μὴ γένοιτο.

But if the relative clause ὃν προέγνω does not serve a limiting function,

what role does it play? As we shall show below, it comprises one in a series of

arguments for Israel's enduring election.

2.1. *Supporting arguments for 11.1 in 11.2-10*

2.1.1. Paul himself serves as evidence that God has not rejected His people:

Although some scholars maintain that Paul is not attempting to promote himself

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[523] Murray, II:67, notes: "The first part of verse 2 is the direct reply unfolding what is implicit in the latter part of verse 1."

[524] Indeed, as Meyer (201) and SH (310) note, this entire chapter concerns itself *not* with spiritual Israel but with the fate of the Jewish nation as an ethnic group and with its election in light of Jesus Christ.

as an example of God's faithfulness to Israel,[525] linguistic and structural considerations argue to the contrary. As we have previously noted,[526] Paul's favored mode of argumentation follows a standard, diatribal pattern: after introducing an often controversial argument whose premises may be fairly easily harnessed to a false conclusion, Paul employs a rhetorical question to voice the false deduction which he wants to overturn; he then emphatically negates the false conclusion (which his opponents might seek to draw from his theology) by means of the trenchant μὴ γένοιτο, and follows typically with one or more reasons why the false inference must be rejected.

In light of this standardized format, it seems highly likely that Paul's reference to himself in 11.1 does serve to support his thesis by means of example. Additionally, Paul's use of γάρ makes it virtually certain.

The question then arises, "What does Paul see in his own case to compel the conclusion that God has not rejected Israel?" To this question there have been various responses:

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[525] So SH, Denney, Knox, Zeller, Dunn. (Barrett admits the possibility, but feels the majority view to be more likely.) Dunn sums up the minority position particularly well (635): "The usual suggestion...that Paul puts himself forward in a representative capacity (God has not rejected his people because he has not rejected me!) both misses and cheapens the point.... As in 2 Cor 11.22 and Phil 3.5-6 what is at stake is Paul's claim to express an authentically Jewish viewpoint and understanding of God's workings, to be speaking *as* a Jew." Murray, 66, though unwilling to make a final decision either way, notes the possibility that Paul's appeal to his own identity could help to understand "...the *vehemence* of his negative reply 'God forbid' and, therefore, the reason why he recoils from the suggestion that God has cast off his people," i.e., Paul's own kinship with Israel provokes this reaction. SH, 309, suppose Paul's purpose in reminding his readers that he is an Israelite to be "...if possible to disarm criticism" and to show that "...to him, as much as to them, the supposition seems almost blasphemous." The fact that Paul has strongly asserted his own links with the people of Israel at the beginnings of both previous sections (9.1-5; 10.1) lends some weight to this position. But the overall strength of evidence favors the majority position.

But in fact there is no need to choose between the two. Though we may hold that in the immediate function of the argument, Paul's self-reference serves as an example to support the declaration of μὴ γένοιτο, we may also accept secondarily that throughout Romans 9-11 Paul attempts to be sensitive to his Jewish kinsfolk, and to identify with them as much as he can. His extended self-description then serves this end admirably.

[526] Cf. above, 156-57, on use of μὴ γένοιτο in 9.14.

a) the simple fact that Paul the Jew has become a Christian demonstrates the truth that God has not rejected Israel as a whole;[527]

b) Paul represents those Jews who had already responded favorably to Christ, and this demonstrates that God has not rejected ethnic Israel (so Fitzmyer);

c) the fact that Paul (formerly Saul the Pharisee, the most zealous persecutor of Christ and his church) could be accepted by God demonstrates that no Israelite is beyond the reach of God's mercy;

d) the fact that Paul as a Jew has been made a "chosen vessel" (Acts 9.15) to carry the gospel to the Gentiles shows that God has not cast Israel aside from the purpose for which she was elected -- to be a light to the Gentiles.[528]

Options a) and b) are less than satisfactory. The fact of a remnant in and of itself, be it composed of one or many, does not guarantee the election of the whole people. The perspective at Qumran is clearly demonstrates this.[529] An opponent could readily grant that some Jews had become Christians but find no necessary connection between this and any ongoing divine commitment to Israel. It could be argued that in the same way as God made exceptions in Old Testament days by accepting some foreigners into His people (which did not imply the election of the Gentiles as a whole), so also now God has made a few exceptions in accepting some Jews into the church, but this need imply nothing favorable about Israel's status before God as a people.

Option c) is attractive precisely because it highlights the grace of God

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[527] Cf. Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 162, 163.

[528] So Cranfield, 544: "...in his person the missionary vocation of Israel is at last being fulfilled and Israel is actively associated with the work of the risen Christ." Edwards, 261, also follows this line of thought: "Would God have chosen a Jew to be his special envoy to the Gentiles if he were finished with the Jews?"

[529] Cf. our chapter on election at Qumran above, especially 86-89, 92-94.

which reaches out and lays hold of individuals while they are yet enemies of Christ, a theme trumpeted by Paul in Romans 5. Implicit in this approach is an *a minori ad maius* argument -- if God could show mercy to Paul the fierce persecutor of Christ and his people, how much easier will it be for God to accept the mass of the Jews who as yet are outside Christ but less zealous in their attacks on the church than the pre-conversion Paul had been. As a defense for his claim that God has not rejected Israel, this perspective fits well.

But perhaps even better is option d), which may encompass the previous point but leads even further. For Paul is not just a Jew who has accepted Jesus as Messiah, he is not even simply the Pharisee who in times past had proven himself the greatest Jewish persecutor of the church, but he is Paul the apostle, divinely appointed as chief ambassador of the Jewish Messiah to the Gentile nations. As such, he is living proof that God has not given up on His people, but continues to use them (preeminently in Paul himself) as a light to the Gentiles.[530] If God had truly rejected the people of Israel, would he call a Jew to such a strategic and central place of importance in salvation history?

Thus, not the fact that Saul, an Israelite, had become *a Christian*, but that Saul, the zealous Pharisee, had become *the apostle* Paul, provides a strong support for this forceful claim that God has not rejected Israel.[531]

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[530] This fits well with the insight of Leenhardt, 278, that in verse 1 Paul is concerned not with Israel's disobedience, but her vocation.

[531] Hence, we cannot agree with Barrett (207) that in 11.1 (as opposed to 3.3), Paul does not appeal to theological grounds, but "...bases it [his μὴ γένοιτο] upon a simple matter of fact" (Achtemeier, 179, also takes this view). Paul's own conversion was indeed a matter of historical fact, but by no means divorced from the theological purpose of his calling as apostle. In citing himself as an example, Paul is looking beyond the historical fact of his Damascus road experience both backward in time to his pre-conversion hostility to Christ and forward in time to his divine commission as apostle to the Gentiles. Thus his own life highlights the centrality of God's grace for rebels and the ongoing mission of Israel as a light to the Gentiles, both providing theological grounds which bolster his μὴ γένοιτο of 11.1b.

2.1.2. Scripture itself confirms God's faithfulness to His people:

Implicit[532] in both the question and answer of verses 1-2 is the argument

that Scripture itself guarantees that God will not reject Israel.[533] As we have

already seen, Paul's wording is highly dependent on the text of 1 Sam 12.22.

By the change of verb tense, Paul indicates his belief that this Old Testament

promise has been carried through in the present despite the massive dis-

obedience of contemporary Israel: οὐκ ἀπώσατο ὁ θεός τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ. Fur-

ther, the immediate juxtaposition of ὁ θεός and τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ makes the

thought of rejection seemingly impossible. The bond God has forged with cor-

porate Israel is too strong to be broken, even by their willful disobedience.

2.1.3. God's foreknowledge of Israel supports the continuity of her divine election:

As we argued above, ὃν προέγνω does not carry a limiting function, but

refers to ethnic Israel as a whole and supports Paul's claim of her ongoing elec-

tion. Thus, *because* God foreknew Israel, He has not rejected her.[534]

Πρόγνωσις is without doubt an election term, but it is capable of various shades

of meaning, each of which would shape our interpretation differently. Israel,

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[532] One may legitimately question whether Gentile readers would have been likely to pick up this allusion to the Old Testament. Even if not, however, this would not in itself negate the likelihood that Paul found it to be a strong support for his position.

This issue seems to raise once again the question of the composition of Paul's reader-ship, but if we remember that this finely honed argument of Romans 9-11 was most likely forged in the fires of Paul's extensive encounters with *Jewish* critics, then the copious and detailed references to the Old Testament are easily explained from their original context without having to pursue rather unproductively in these three chapters the question of whether the Roman church was predominantly Jewish or Gentile.

[533] So Cranfield, 544: "Holy Scripture testifies that God will not cast off His people." Cf. also Meyer, 200.

[534] Cranfield, 545: "The fact that God foreknew them (i.e., deliberately joined them to Himself in faithful love) excludes the possibility of His casting them off."

the ethnic people of God, is elect, but in what sense? Προγινώσκω may be construed in the following ways:

a) in its classical Greek sense, it denotes prescience -- "to know in advance," and by nature refers to events, states of affairs, or information.[535] When attributed to God, foreknowledge in this sense means that God knows the outcome of some or all things before they take place in history. However, this view does not well suit the usage of προγινώσκω in Romans 11.2, where the type of knowledge involved is not simply noetic but relational. It is a *people* whom God has foreknown, not a condition or event within history.[536]

b) In its biblical usage, προγινώσκω retains the sense of knowing in advance, but the concept of knowledge is enriched beyond the noetic realm to that of personal relationship. It is well known that the central Hebrew verb of knowing, ידע, is often colored by this element of personal involvement and interaction between the knower and what is known.[537] This perspective is presupposed with reference to God knowing individuals (cf. e.g., Jer 1.5) or people groups.[538] In this arena, "to know" means "to establish a relationship

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[535] Cf. P. Jacobs and H. Krienke, 'Foreknowledge, Providence, Predestination', *NIDNTT* 1:692-697. "The early Gks. understood this as non-verbal foreknowledge of a dream-like kind which can however be apprehended and communicated by those who were clever enough. It belongs to the realm of destiny" (692). Later Greek thinkers, especially among the Stoics, transformed the concept of foreknowledge by viewing pantheistically "...as an expression of the purposefully creative order of the divine world-force which includes both nature and men.... Divinity, destiny, order and necessity become identical" (692).

[536] Certainly Paul would agree that both Israel's present condition of unbelief and her future reception of salvation were foreknown by God in the classical sense -- indeed, the whole of Romans 9-11 makes it abundantly clear that these conditions are inextricably woven together in God's overarching purpose to redeem all creation, and hence are seen in advance because they are determined in advance by God -- but this affirmation does not help Paul's argument in Romans 11.1ff.

[537] Cf. above, 23, 35 n80, 74-83.

[538] B.W. Anderson, "Foreknow", 311, concludes: "Thus God's knowing, being the expression of his personal will, is also an act of election (Gen. 18:19; Hos. 13:5; Amos 3:2; II Tim. 2:19), as indicated in the words: 'I know you by name' (Exod. 33:12; cf. Isa. 43:1; 45:3-4; 49:1)."

with" or, especially when God's initiative is being stressed, "to choose."[539] To

speak of divine foreknowledge with respect to individuals or peoples, while not

necessarily implying a pretemporal choice,[540] certainly indicates the purposive

election of God well prior to the actual implementation of that choice.[541] And

in light of what Paul has already declared in Romans 9.11ff. about God's

sovereign freedom in electing apart from human distinctives, in 11.2 Paul can-

not mean that God's foreknowledge of Israel was based on anything inherent in

the people themselves or in their future activity, but only that such a prior elec-

tion was decided upon by God in complete freedom.

However, this still leaves the thorny question of the nature of this elec-

tion. Does God's foreknowledge of Israel at this point in Paul's argument

imply an election of ethnic Israel to ultimate salvation, or an election of the

people to a special role in history with the particular blessings that entailed?

The majority of commentators see in ὃν προέγνω a declaration by Paul

that God has indeed elected even unbelieving Israel to ultimate salvation. Some

point to the use of προγινώσκω in 8.29 where the immediate context makes

clear that God's foreknowledge has direct soteriological ramifications, and

assert that προέγνω in 11.2 must have the same sense.[542] Thus God maintains

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[539] Num 16.5 LXX demonstrates clearly that γινώσκω in this biblical sense can refer to election.

[540] The use of προγινώσκω in 8.29 would lend support to the idea of election as part of the pretemporal plan of God. But in light of 11.28, where the validity of Israel's ongoing elec-tion is traced back to God's promises to the patriarchs, foreknowledge in 11.2 could equally be a reference back to that point in history of God's evident selection of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (and their descendants) for a unique future.

[541] R. Bultmann, *TDNT* 1:715, writes: "His foreknowledge...is an election or foreor-dination of His people (R. 8:29; 11:2)...." Cf. in conjuction with this Judith 9.6 LXX, where πρόγνωσις is used of the predeterminative knowledge of God.
Dodd, 174, interprets verses 2ff. to mean that God has not repudiated his *predestined* people, i.e., the people of Israel as a whole, whom God chose in Abraham.

[542] So Leenhardt, 278; Meyer, 201.

the integrity of His unconditional love for Israel by refusing to repudiate them despite their rejection of His Son.[543]

Certainly this understanding of ὃν προέγνω would serve Paul's purpose as a support for his immediately preceding claim that God has not rejected Israel. However, it is problematic for two closely related reasons.

First, if Paul now claims that contemporary unbelieving Israel's election to ultimate salvation has never been in doubt, then he contradicts his opening declarations in chapter 9. For, as we saw in our previous investigations,[544] Paul opens the ninth chapter with the most strongly worded and emotionally charged statement concerning his grief over his unbelieving kinsfolk. If in the apostle's mind God's foreknowledge of the nation of Israel meant the election to salvation of all or even most of the presently recalcitrant Jews, then there would be little cause for grief. In answer to the question of God's faithfulness to His promises, Paul could simply have said in 9.6b that although things look bad for his kins-men, their soteriological election is secure because God has foreknown them. But this he precisely does *not* do. Instead, Paul argues that God's word has not fallen because not all Israelites have been chosen by God as children of promise and thus heirs of eternal life. God is faithful to His promises for those whom He in sovereign freedom has called and chosen to be vessels of mercy.[545]

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[543] Leenhardt, 278: "His faithfulness to Israel is that of love." Similarly Cranfield, 545, "The fact that God foreknew them (i.e., deliberately joined them to Himself in faithful love) excludes the possibility of His casting them off." Gundry-Wolf, 167, also pursues this line: "Divine foreknowledge refers to God's election in eternity of a people to be set apart for God."

[544] Cf. above, 127-32.

[545] Cf. above, 133-49.
In wrestling with this problem, Gundry-Wolf attempts to resolve the difficulty by con-tending that Paul's argument in Romans 9.6ff. does not assert unbelieving Israel's rejection by God but only a lack of present enjoyment of the reality inherent in that election. Thus she writes (168 n29): "The argument that divine foreknowledge precludes rejection does not con-tradict 9.7-13, where Paul emphasizes God's sovereignty in dealing with God's elect people. In the earlier passage Israel is not rejected but excluded from *present* participation in salvation." While this is an appealing attempt at reconciliation, it fails to do justice to the primary concern

Second, in 11.2c-10 Paul essentially recapitulates the argument of chapters 9 and 10. If he intended in verse 2 to take his readers to "a different level of argument" by asserting that God's election of unbelieving Israel is secure in a soteriological sense because His foreknowledge of her necessarily entails her future salvation, then in the next eight verses Paul would subsequently undermine his purpose by falling back into a rehearsal of his earlier arguments, which prove incompatible with the above view of God's foreknowing of Israel.[546] Furthermore, it seems odd that Paul would then appeal to remnant imagery to support the view that all Israel has not ultimately been rejected. The remnant concept argues strongly that although many individual Israelites have indeed been rejected by God over past generations, nevertheless God has not cast aside His purposes with and promises to the corporate nation of Israel. God still intends a glorious destiny for the Israel which He will at some future date fully redeem.

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of Paul voiced in 9.2-3 -- his belief that many of his contemporary "brothers according to the flesh" were anathema before God and doomed to ἀπώλεια, and the overwhelmingly sad feelings this fact raised within him. Furthermore, it fails to face squarely the fact that in 9.6-13 Paul indeed *does* deal with the question of the election of Israel. His central aim is to argue that within the election of the ethnic people of Israel to historical roles and blessings God has acted freely according to His "purpose of election" to call *from them* children of promise to receive the soteriological blessings of Christ. Thus not all the elect people (in the theocratic, earthly sense) are part of the elect people in the soteriological sense; i.e., though contemporary, unbelieving Israel is elect in the former sense, it is not (as a whole) elect in the latter, more ultimate sense. This is how Paul supports his assertion that God's word has not failed in spite of Israel's massive rejection of her Messiah.

[546] Paul's contrast of Ἰσραήλ with ἡ ἐκλογή in 11.7 makes this abundantly clear. Harking back to 9.30-10.3, Paul declares that what unbelieving Israel continues to seek (ἐπιζητεῖ), i.e., salvation, it has not obtained; but the elect (ἡ ἐκλογή), i.e., the children of promise within ethnic Israel have. It seems clear that Paul is still operating with a sense of distinction between the elect within Israel (who have received what they sought) and the unbelieving majority, whom he does not categorize as elect in this sense. If the apostle understood all ethnic Israel to be elect in this ultimate sense, and were merely seeking to distinguish between those in Israel who presently enjoyed the blessings of salvation and those who did not as of yet, then it makes little sense for him to have used the term ἡ ἐκλογή to designate the former. Instead, he ought to have referred to these Christian Jews by the word λεῖμμα (as in verse 5) or some such distinguishing term which would not throw into doubt the election of all Israel to salvation.

Therefore we are driven to a different interpretation of ὃν προέγνω from that offered above. While God's foreknowledge of Israel refers here to present unbelieving Israel, it does not necessarily imply an election to salvation. Rather, it serves mainly to insert a "differentiating ingredient"[547] -- ethnic Israel has been specially set apart by God in distinction to the rest of the nations. The declaration that God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew reiterates Paul's perception in 9.4-5 that even unbelieving Israel is still the recipient of tremendous blessings and privileges not given to other peoples. In the apostle's mind, Israel's theocratic election still endures. God continues to utilize her for His purposes and to maintain a special attitude towards her. One may readily admit that in this assertion there is a bold hint of God's ultimate saving intent toward unbelieving Israel (though this will not necessarily include many or all of those belonging to Paul's contemporary, intransigent kinsfolk). But it remains only a hint until Paul turns his attention in verses 11ff. to the eschatological future and shares his insights as to God's conduct towards the ethnic people of Israel living in the final days.

Thus, the facts of God's having freely chosen a people for himself without regard to their praiseworthy or blameworthy conduct, and of having settled on His purposes long before Israel's present intransigence before the gospel, support Paul's claim that God has not rejected the nation of Israel.

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[547] Murray, II:68 notes: "If Israel can be called God's 'people', it is only that which is implied in 'foreknowledge' that warrants the appellation. There should be no difficulty in recognizing the appropriateness of calling Israel the people whom God foreknew. Israel had been elected and peculiarly loved and thus distinguished from all other nations....It is in this sense that 'foreknew' would be used in this case." In comparing προέγνω here with its use in 8.29, he recognizes that "It has inherent in itself the differentiating ingredient. But in this instance it has the more generic application as in Amos 3:2 and not the particularizing and strictly soteric import found in 8:29..." (II:68 n6).

2.1.4. The continuing existence of a remnant shows that God has not rejected Israel as an entity (verses 2-10):

Paul once again picks up the remnant theme which he first voiced at 9.27 in his quotation of Is. 10.22. But whereas in chapter 9 his purpose in using this concept was to emphasize the **smallness** of the number of Israelites being saved, here he wishes to stress the **continuity** of God's gracious plan for Israel. The existence of a remnant of Israelites serves as a bridge from God's past election of His people over the present time of widespread apostasy to the final display of the fulfillment of His electing purposes in the salvation of "all Israel."[548]

Thus in verse 5, Paul affirms οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ λεῖμμα κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν χάριτος γέγονεν. By using οὕτως οὖν καὶ, Paul signals the conclusion he wishes to draw from the preceding illustration of verses 2c-4. The situation of present day Israel mirrors quite closely that of Israel in the days of Elijah. In introducing the story of 1 Kg 19.9-18, Paul highlights how the prophet *pleads* (ἐντυγχάνει) with God *against Israel* (κατὰ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ). No doubt this is intended to emphasize the propriety of God's harsh judgment upon the people who have rejected Him -- Elijah serves as a symbol of divine righteousness expressed in wrath.[549] According to Leenhardt (278), Elijah was "the living symbol of the fidelity of God struggling with the infidelity of men" (278). But Paul frames Elijah's complaint against the people primarily as a foil

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[548] Cf. our discussion of the 'bridging function' of the remnant concept in the Old Testament above, 61-64.

[549] Leenhardt, 278-9, sees Paul as in some sense parallel to Elijah due to the woes both suffered at the hands of their own people (cf. also Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 107-109; Käsemann, 301). While this is certainly implicit, it is not a parallel which Paul draws. Indeed, one might rather argue that Paul contrasts himself with Elijah in one important sense: whereas the Old Testament prophet sought the outworking of God's judgment on the people (cf. Paul's use of ἐντυγχάνω...κατὰ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ), Paul has already made it clear numerous times that his heart's desire is the salvation of even present-day recalcitrant Israel.

to emphasize that God's purposes embrace not only wrath but also mercy --

thus, while the prophet calls for complete extermination, God reveals that in His

mercy He has kept a remnant; i.e., God will not make a full end of Israel.[550]

The divine response to Elijah reveals that 7,000 men have not bowed the

knee to Baal and thus have been spared by God. But even more, Paul

emphasizes the fact of God's initiative in this activity.[551] Κατέλιπον[552] denotes

the determinative activity of God in setting this remnant apart from the destruc-

tion awaiting the rest of Israel. The reflexive pronoun ἐμαυτῷ is not found in

the LXX of 1 Kg 19.18, nor its Hebrew equivalent in the MT. Thus its inser-

tion by Paul demonstrates his desire to accentuate the freedom of God to carry

out His electing purpose for His own ends. "I have kept for myself" = "I have

set apart for my own ends."

Some commentators have seen in the number 7,000 an indication of

open-endedness on God's part toward the salvation of greater Israel.[553] Thus

Cranfield asserts that the number 7,000 is hardly to be understood

> ...as a mere reflection of a traditional estimate of the actual
> number of those who remained faithful in this time of
> national apostasy, but is rather to be understood in the light
> of the special significance attaching to the number seven and
> to multiples of seven in the Bible and in Judaism, as a sym-
> bol of completeness, perfection. God's statement that He is

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[550] Paul's use of the unusual term ὁ χρηματισμός accentuates this. Whether we see it in terms of "a decree or ordinance made by a sovereign or public authority" or of an "oracular, divine utterance" (cf. Hanson, "Oracle," 300-301; Dunn, 637), χρηματισμός lends prominence in Paul's argument to God's response to the pleading of Elijah. Cf. Black, 142.

[551] B. Mayer, *Unter Gottes Heilsratschluβ*, 250, correctly concludes: "Paulus hat also dem Gottesspruch eine Form gegeben, die Gottes souveränes Handeln hervorhebt."

[552] Paul seems to offer this quotation from memory, as it finds no exact parallels in either the Hebrew or LXX texts of 1 Kg 19.18. Though the same verb is used in the LXX, it is the second person singular form of the future tense, καταλείψεις -- i.e., God is commanding Elijah to set aside as a remnant the 7,000 who have not worshiped Baal. The Hebrew וְהִשְׁאַרְתִּי accords much better with Paul's purpose, emphasizing the sovereign decision of God in sparing the remnant.

[553] So Cranfield, Edwards, and to some degree, Dunn.

> preserving for Himself seven thousand men in Israel amounts
> to a declaration of His faithfulness to His purpose of salva-
> tion for His people, a declaration that that purpose will con-
> tinue unchanged and unthwarted to its final goal.[554]

But this seems to read quite a bit more into the meaning of the number than

Paul or certainly the author of 1 Kings intended.[555] As Cranfield himself recog-

nizes, the immediate context of 1 Kg 19.18 underscores God's wrath toward the

greater part of Israel[556] -- it is only the remnant which will come through

unscathed. Further, the direct implication of 1 Kg 19.18 in its context is that in

contrast with the large mass of Israelites who have apostasized, the remnant

consists of that relatively small number of Jews whom God has kept faithful.[557]

In addition to this, if one is justified in attributing the symbolism of 'perfec-

tion/completion' to 7,000 in this instance, it need not imply what Cranfield

infers. More likely (especially in light of the judgment context) is the idea that

the remnant number of 7,000 represents the complete, full though limited num-

ber of those Israelites being spared by God in Elijah's day -- it declares that this

limited group alone is being saved out of the whole of Israel; the rest are not

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[554] Cranfield, 547. Edwards likewise asserts that the number 7,000 does not point to a discrete, limited group, but rather means completion or totality -- "more people than you can count" (261).

[555] Dunn, 638, correctly emphasizes that since Paul merely quotes the number 7,000 and does not go on to draw any conclusions from it regarding the open-endedness of God's covenant promise to Israel, one may not press the interpretation which Cranfield seeks to promote. He does, however, wish to remain open to it, a stance which we repudiate for reasons provided below.

[556] Cranfield, 548, admits that "...there is certainly no intention in the Elijah narrative to gloss over the reality of God's punishment of Israel's sin -- the biggest part of the divine answer in 1 Kgs 19.15-18 is in fact concerned with it."

[557] Murray correctly discerns that a central part of Paul's purpose in using the Elijah story is to draw a strong parallel between the relatively small number of the remnant in the days of Ahab and the comparatively few Jews in Paul's day who had embraced Jesus as Messiah. He writes (II:69), "This fact [of the small remnant of 7,000] underscores the widespread apostasy in Israel at that time and points to the parallel between Elijah's time and the apostle's. This is a consideration basic to the use Paul makes of the Old Testament passage."

accorded any hope of avoiding God's wrath. Thus, rather than indicating an open-ended, inclusive number, the use of 7,000 denotes instead a strict limitation on the size of the group presently benefiting from God's electing grace.

Such an interpretation accords well with the main intent of remnant theology generally -- to provide a secure link during a present period of prevailing apostasy between the people of God in Israel's history and those Israelites who will comprise the future people of God.[558] Always implicit in this pattern is the determination that those of the present generation excluded from the remnant are cut off from God's blessing and ultimate favor.[559] The 'rest' are cast off, and only the remnant remains in the heart of the divine love until God purposes once again to build through the remnant a *new* generation of Israel for Himself. From this perspective, Paul can sensibly argue that although the majority of his kinsfolk have been cast off by God, yet God has not rejected Israel as an entity. Unbelieving Israel (though not for the most part those unbelieving Jews of Paul's own day -- cf. 9.2-6) in the future may yet be turned back to God.

The present existence of a Jewish remnant underlines the fact of God's continuing commitment to the nation of Israel. Israel was not entirely repudiated during the time of Elijah, and neither is she now.[560] In the same

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[558] Hasel, 172, notes concerning this Elijah narrative: "The future existence of Israel as Yahweh's covenant people depends on the small remnant of seven thousand. What we have here is the locus classicus of the promised remnant in the sense that we meet in this passage for the first time in the history of Israel the promise of a future remnant that constitutes the kernel of a new Israel."

[559] C. Müller, 45-46, argues that traditionally in late Hebrew thought the idea of the remnant is linked with judgment rather than the rescue of greater Israel. But Clements ("Remnant," 106-19) notes that the remnant concept can have a 'saved' or 'saving' emphasis, and argues (118) that during the Diaspora, "The return of the remnant became an image and model of Jewish hope, and thereby the concept of the remnant entered into a central position in Jewish eschatological hope" (cf. also Campbell, "Place of Romans," 130 n63). Yet even if this is the case, the saving activity of the remnant is typically seen as pertaining to future rather than contemporary, rejected Israel.

[560] Cf. Fitzmyer, 860.

way as God in His grace set apart 7,000 Israelites who had not bowed the knee

to Baal, so now in Paul's day God again by grace has set apart a number of

Israelites to faith in Christ and consequent salvation. The clause λεῖμμα κατ'

ἐκλογὴν χάριτος γέγονεν in 11.5 emphasizes both the choosing activity of God

and the fact that His choice of individuals to comprise the remnant is based

solely upon His grace.[561] Paul refrains from attributing God's choice to prior

faith on the part of those selected. Instead, he accentuates in verse 6 that the

divine election of the remnant is completely oblivious to any laudable activity or

distinctiveness in their lives: εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων. Here again we find

a strong echo of 9.11 -- οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος. And just as in

the context of 9.11ff. the subject under consideration is the election of individu-

als to eternal destinies, so also here in 11.5ff. we find the same concern.

Paul has drawn upon this Elijah narrative to set up a type-antitype com-

parison between the remnant/rest of Israel in Elijah's day and the remnant/rest

in his own day.[562] The *historical* fate of the remnant and the rejected mass of

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[561] Some scholars have implied that in his emphasis on God's election of the remnant through grace Paul's teaching provided a sense of hope for the rest of Israel, presently outside the sphere of God's blessing. Since God is free to choose whom He will apart from their behavior (good or bad), the fact that God has chosen a remnant is "...full of promise for the rest of the nation" (Cranfield, 547). But one must be careful here not to assert more than Paul intends. For the apostle writes this section not for Jewish readers but for Christians -- his intent is not to encourage unbelieving Jews by affirming that God will ultimately win them to Christ; rather he wishes to continue to drive home his thesis to Christian readers that God is not unfaithful to His promises. Though the majority of contemporary Israel is by and large rejected, the existence of a remnant proves that Israel as a nation has not been cut off from God's gracious purposes. As 11.11-32 will show, God has grand and glorious plans for future Israel.

One may certainly doubt that the presence of a remnant would have engendered any sense of hope among those not included in it. Throughout Israel's history, the fact that only the remnant is spared and the rest are destroyed or left to their own devices would serve instead to support the idea that the existence of a remnant (if recognized as such by those outside) signals the judgment of God on the rest.

[562] The οὕτως at the commencement of verse 5 demonstrates that Paul sees God's actions in the Elijah narrative as *typical* of the way God acts through history and indeed particu-larly in his own day. Concerning ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, Dunn notes that this phrase sounds a specifi-cally eschatological note (cf. Rom 3.26) and gives the Elijah case "typological significance" (638).

Israel under Ahab reflects by way of parallel the *soteriological* fate of the pre-

sent remnant (of believing Jews) and the large core of unbelieving Israelites.[563]

God's determination to save a remnant of the people in the days of the divided

monarchy shows clearly that God had not cast off Israel as a people (even

though as a result of the widespread apostasy evident in Elijah's day the great

majority of Israelites were destroyed). So now, Paul contends, God maintains

his continuity of purpose with the nation of Israel in the midst of her present,

wholesale rejection of Christ by calling to salvation a remnant of Jews who

embrace the gospel even while the large majority of Jews (who continue in

unbelief) are branded as anathema and cut off from salvation in Christ. The

historical destruction of the unfaithful Jews in Elijah's day presages the

soteriological condemnation of the mass of Israel in Paul's day.

This interpretation is supported by the summary conclusion Paul draws

from 11.1-6 in verse 7, with its obvious allusions back to 9.18 and 9.30-10.3.

The conclusion falls into two parts: a) the elect[564] obtained what the rest did

not; b) the reason for failure among the rest is attributed to the hardening of

their hearts. We shall look at these in turn.

a) *The elect obtained what the rest did not.* Though Paul uses different

verbs in 11.7 (ἐπιζητέω / ἐπιτυγχάνω) from those in 9.30-10.3 (διώκω /

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[563] Meyer, 205, recognizes that the point of Paul's comparison is a distinguishing between the remnant and the mass of Israel. "The latter, in the typical history perished, but in this present antitypical event has forfeited saving deliverance."

[564] Paul actually uses the abstract noun ἡ ἐκλογή rather than the more concrete οἱ ἐκλεκτοί. One possible explanation for this is that Paul sought to maintain a stylistic balance of contrast between Israel and the elect ('Ισραὴλ οὐκ ἐπέτυχεν, ἡ δὲ ἐκλογὴ ἐπέτυχεν). This, however, would clash with his obvious desire to demonstrate that the elect remnant *as members of the people of Israel themselves* (cf. Käsemann, 300-301; Wilckens, 238) certify by their exist-ence that God has not washed His hands of the nation and its future. Much more likely, then, is the view of SH (313) and Cranfield (548) that by using the abstract, Paul draws attention more to the idea of election than to the individuals involved (though see Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 606), and hence focuses the reader's mind on the free activity of God as determinative of the existence of the elect rather than anything in the elect themselves.

καταλαμβάνω, φθάνω), the structure and content of his thought form an

obvious restatement of this earlier discussion. Thus the object (ὅ) of the verbs

of seeking and obtaining must be that of the previous discussion, i.e., righteous-

ness leading to salvation.[565] Due solely to the grace of God (11.6; cf. 9.11-13),

those individuals whom God elected have obtained this righteousness and thus

salvation in Christ. But those individuals who pursued this righteousness

through a misuse of the Law, seeking to establish their own righteousness

(10.3), have not obtained this righteousness and hence do not share in salvation

through Christ.

b) *The rest were hardened.* οἱ λοιποί is the standard Greek term for "the

others," "the rest."[566] Though Dunn is right that Paul gives no indication here

of the size of this group, large or small, one may not draw from this the

implication that Paul believed "...that in the final count οἱ λοιποί will be also

counted among the λεῖμμα κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν χάριτος."[567] Quite to the contrary,

the fact that Paul felt it necessary to write chapters 9-11 at all makes it clear that

he viewed the apostasy of Israel as a widespread problem involving a large

proportion[568] of his kinsmen -- a problem needing to be addressed. Addi-

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[565] 9.30-32 make clear that righteousness is the goal to be attained. 10.1 demonstrates Paul's conviction that as a result of not attaining this goal, his unbelieving kinsmen stand outside of God's salvation (note Paul's use of σωτηρία in this regard). Murray, II:71, writes: "What the elect have obtained is the righteousness of God and with it God's favour and acceptance." He goes on to define further the object of pursuit as "righteousness unto eternal salvation" (II:72).

[566] Because of this, Dunn's supposition that Paul might have been aware of the occasional use of οἱ λοιποί in the LXX to define the remnant and so used this term himself as a deliberate play on words to further imply that in the end οἱ λοιποί (= the rest) who are rejected would be included in οἱ λοιποί (= the remnant) who are saved, is not convincing.

[567] Dunn, 640.

[568] So Käsemann, 301: "...the reference [οἱ λοιποί] is to the overwhelming majority of the people."

tionally, the parallel Paul draws with the Elijah narrative in 11.2-5 further

emphasizes the small remnant vs. large body theme. If there is any implication

from Paul's argument and situation, it is that the remnant at present constitutes a

relatively small number of the total population of contemporary Israel.

ἐπωρώθησαν should be understood as a divine passive for the following

reasons: 1) the overwhelming emphasis in Paul's overall argument from chapter

9 on as well as particularly in 11.1-6 has been on the determinative activity of

God; 2) the use of πωρόω here finds a ready parallel with σκληρύνω in 9.18

where the hardening activity is undeniably God's; 3) in the immediately preced-

ing clause Paul has drawn attention to the divine activity behind the salvation of

the elect -- it would be most natural to read ἐπωρώθησαν in the following, con-

nected clause in the same sense, alluding to the divine activity behind the har-

dening of the rest; 4) verses 8-10 are quoted from the Old Testament precisely

to emphasize the direct agency of God in planning and executing this hardening

in the lives of those not elected,[569] and to illustrate that contemporary Israel's

blindness is of a piece with the spiritual dullness which has affected the Jewish

nation continuously from the time of Moses.

But does this hardening indicate a merely historical rejection by God, or,

as in 9.13,18, an ultimate and eternal reprobation? Cranfield is quick to assert

the former, appealing to context. Yet as we have seen, there is nothing in the

preceding context which would imply a positive future for those unbelieving

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[569] Especially noteworthy is Paul's modification of Dt 29.4 (LXX 29.3). The LXX
reads: καὶ οὐκ ἔδωκεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς...ὀφθαλμοὺς βλέπειν καὶ ὦτα ἀκούειν.... Paul strips the
negative modifier οὐ from the main verb, and adds μή instead to the two infinitives which he
then expands into articular phrases: ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς...ὀφθαλμοὺς τοῦ μὴ βλέπειν καὶ ὦτα
τοῦ μὴ ἀκούειν.... This has a two-fold effect. By changing the sentence from a negative to a
positive statement, Paul highlights both God's initiative and His agency in this hardening
activity; and by creating articular infinitival phrases, he gives these verbs a consecutive sense,
i.e., "so that they will not see...so that they will not hear". These small changes to the LXX
enable Paul to accentuate both the sovereign purpose of God in acting as He does toward those
constituting the λοιποί, and their hardening as a direct result of divine activity.

Israelites presently outside the remnant.[570] Indeed quite to the contrary, Paul

has made it clear that contemporary Israel faces God's wrath and ultimate judg-

ment (9.2-3,18,22-23,27-28; 11.5-7). And in the immediate context there are

indicators that this πώρωσις of greater Israel designates a state of heart which

renders the individuals affected incapable of benefiting from the saving grace of

God.[571] First of all, Paul contrasts the act of hardening with that of the receipt

of "righteousness unto eternal life" by the elect. Since the two are contrasted,

the implication seems to be: "If election leads to salvation, hardening must lead

to its opposite." Secondly, and in conjunction with this, the hardened majority

are described in verse 7 as having failed to obtain this righteousness which leads

to salvation. Thirdly, the parallels with 9.18 remain very striking: there, the

elect are those upon whom God has chosen to have mercy; the rest are those

upon whom God has chosen to pour His wrath. As we attempted to

demonstrate earlier, the context of this summary statement deals undeniably

with issues of eternal destinies.[572] Thus, as 11.7 parallels 9.18 so closely in

form and content, it is not surprising that the idea of hardening here should

carry the same connotations.

Appeal has been made to Paul's slight modification of the final preposi-

tional phrase of the Dt 29.4 quotation as evidence that the apostle perhaps was

signaling a temporal limit to this hardening.[573] Cranfield notes that ἔως τῆς

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[570] To be sure, in the subsequent sections of Romans 11 there is much evidence that future Israel will be reinstated by God. But it is not fair to read back into Paul's argument at this stage something which he has not yet unveiled. Later in this section, we will consider Paul's positive statements about "all Israel" in their proper setting.

[571] Meyer, 207, defines this πώρωσις as a "making unsusceptible in understanding and will as respects the appropriation of salvation in Christ."

[572] Cf. above, 160-65.

[573] So Cranfield, 550-1.

σήμερον ἡμέρας translates a common OT phrase "to indicate the permanence of a name or situation, or of a result of an event,"[574] and suggests that Paul understands it as a permanent condition up to the present, but perhaps suggesting a limit set to this divine hardening (up to but not beyond this present day), which would seem to fit well with verses 11ff. This is certainly possible, but by no means evident. ἕως τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας draws attention primarily to the continuative aspect of a condition from its inception up to the present. It says nothing directly about the termination point of the condition, and if anything may be implied, it is much more likely to indicate the continuation of that condition into the indefinite future rather than its ending in the present.[575] διὰ παντός as found in the quotation of Ps 69.22-3 (LXX 68.23-4) in verse 10 should be understood in the same way. Cranfield seeks to correct those who mistranslate διὰ παντός as "for ever," pointing out instead its proper meaning of "continually," in the sense of "from one end of a period to the other."[576] He argues that the point of this quotation in Paul's usage is not that the "bowed backs" of unfaithful Israel will go on forever, but that as long as they do go on, the effect will be continuous and not intermittent. But again, one must not read meaning back into this passage from what is still to come. διὰ παντός with the

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[574] Ibid., 550.

[575] 2 Cor 3.14-15 provides an excellent example of this, in the context of Jewish minds having been hardened to the revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul uses the similar ἄχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας in 3.14 followed by ἕως σήμερον in verse 15 to designate a condition of mind and heart in which though Scripture may be read by unbelieving Jews, its true meaning is veiled to them, and will continue to be veiled until such time as the veil may be lifted. In 2 Cor 3, Paul attributes the source of that veiling to the agency of Satan (4.4: "the god of this world") and the removal of the veil to the individual's change of stance from unbeliever to believer (3.16), whereas in Rom 9-11 Paul attributes Israel's blindness to God's sovereign hardening and the responsiveness of the elect likewise to God's sovereign grace. Though there are certainly ways of developing a systematic theology in which both these perspectives may be said to cohere, such was not Paul's concern as he wrestled in two different times and places with similar issues in the context of widely varying purposes.

[576] Ibid., 552.

meaning "continually" may be interpreted as "unceasingly", something not readily distinguishable from "for ever." Though fundamentally it describes a condition between two points of time, if the latter point is not defined, or extended indefinitely into the future, or even to the eschatological day of judgment, διὰ παντός in effect may come to signify "for ever." Perhaps it is noteworthy that the original context of this passage portrays the imprecator as calling divine wrath down upon his enemies and urging God to refuse them acquital, thereby blotting out their names from the book of the living.[577] Such a viewpoint strengthens the contention that διὰ παντός carries overtones of final judgment. As Paul takes up words which originally served as an imprecation against the psalmist's enemies, and later (when Ps 69 came to be understood as a messianic psalm) as a curse of judgment against the enemies of Christ, he applies them to contemporary, unbelieving Israel.[578]

2.2. Summary of Election in Romans 11.1-10

Thus, there is compelling evidence in 11.1-10 that while Paul seeks to defend the thesis that God has not rejected unbelieving Israel *in toto*, this nevertheless does not compel the view that the apostle believed the bulk of his contemporary, recalcitrant kinsmen would finally be accepted by God and redeemed in Christ. Rather, Paul makes clear that the Jews of his generation who remain outside Christ are anathema, cut off from salvation.[579] Yet this

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[577] The LXX text following Ps 68.23-4 reads:

25 ἔκχεον ἐπ' αὐτοὺς τὴν ὀργήν σου,
καὶ ὁ θυμὸς τῆς ὀργῆς σου καταλάβοι αὐτούς....
28 πρόσθες ἀνομίαν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν αὐτῶν,
καὶ μὴ εἰσελθέτωσαν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ σου·
29 ἐξαλειφθήτωσαν ἐκ βίβλου ζώντων
καὶ μετὰ δικαίων μὴ γραφήτωσαν.

[578] Cf. Aageson, "Typology," 60.

[579] To some modern commentators it seems harsh and unthinkable that Paul could have maintained the belief that the majority of his unbelieving kinsmen were destined for destruction

does not mean that God is done with Israel as an entity. Though at many points

in the history of Israel great portions of her population were annihilated by God,

yet God always kept for Himself a remnant of Jews through whom His promise

to Israel as a nation remained alive. Though generations of Jews may be cut

off, yet God does not abrogate His promises and purposes for this ethnic

people. So now, Paul argues, God has chosen a remnant of Israel, evidenced

by Jewish Christians such as himself. Though the rest of his contemporaries

may perish in their unbelief, yet God still has a gracious purpose for future

Israel -- the generations to come. This Paul affirms in 11.1-10.

3. Romans 11.11-24 -- an Introduction

In the opening 10 verses, the apostle Paul has proclaimed in no uncertain

terms God's harsh, unrelenting judgment upon the unbelieving Israelites of his

generation. This culminates in his application of two Old Testament passages to

contemporary Israel, the latter being a Davidic imprecation against his enemies

which Paul in turn applies to his antagonistic kinsmen. After such a strong

emphasis on God's judgment and the seeming finality of it, Paul is compelled to

deal with the question of Israel's future -- specifically the question of whether

hardened Israel will have any positive place in God's future plans, or whether

she has been set aside, with only the remnant of Jewish Christians left as proof

(and rather meager proof) that God in the end has not rejected Israel. In 11.11-

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and eternal separation from God. But if Paul believed that those who died in their unbelief were
eternally lost, and if he accepted the view that throughout Israel's history there was almost
always a substantial portion of the people in any generation who lived and died in unbelief, then
his perspective would include not just contemporary, hardened Israel, but all who throughout
Israel's history had become hardened and subsequently died in unbelief. The situation of Paul's
Jewish contemporaries would then simply reflect one more instance of how God had generally
worked throughout the nation's history, and would thus not be significantly more difficult for
him to accept. As to the justice of God acting in this way at all, much less in Paul's own day,
the apostle has already come to grips with that in 9.14-23.

24, Paul confronts this question head on, as well as the associated issue of misplaced Gentile pride and potential contempt for Israel.

3.1. Election in Romans 11.11-24

Our principle interest is in what this section may tell us about Paul's understanding of the election of unbelieving Israel, though we will also consider briefly what the olive tree metaphor and its application imply concerning the election of those already "in" the faith, both Gentile converts and Jewish Christians.

Concerning the election of unbelieving Israel, certainly Paul would not dispute the fact of Israel's historical, theocratic election. There is good reason to believe as well that he would not dispute the continuing validity of this election (cf. 9.4-5), though the chosen nation has failed to do justice to its calling by fulfilling its responsibility as a light to the Gentiles. Yet, a hint may be found in 11.1 that Paul envisioned Jewish Christians such as himself now fulfilling this role which Israel as a whole had abdicated.

However, Paul's central concern in chapters 9-11 is not with Israel's historical role in God's purposes, but rather with the question of her ultimate, soteriological election. Were not the people of Israel chosen by God to receive the ultimate blessing of salvation? Was this not the main reason for the coming of the Messiah? And yet now the majority of contemporary Israel stands outside God's saving design due first to God's own determinations and consequently to Israel's obstinacy before the gospel. Are God's promises to the Jews empty? If so, does this not demolish the foundation upon which Paul has sought to build his case for the gospel in chapters 1-8? Will not the divine promises to Christians then also prove unreliable? As we demonstrated earlier,[580] God's faithfulness to His past and present promises is the central issue fueling Paul's argument throughout Romans 9-11.

In chapter 9 Paul has already defended God's reliability by demonstrat-
ing that God is free to choose those to whom His promises of eternal life will
apply. Thus, not all who belong to the ethnic Israel of Paul's day are at the
same time members of the Israel of promise, i.e., those Jews elected by God to
salvation. Indeed, the majority of Paul's kinsmen seem to have been hardened
and rejected, while *only* (9.27) a remnant has been spared by God in His mercy.
This leads ultimately to the question of whether God has finished with Israel
once and for all -- is she no longer the chosen nation whose future is directed
and informed by God's kindness? Paul addresses this directly in chapter 11,
and emphatically denies this implication. God has not rejected Israel, even in
her unbelief. But as the course of Paul's argument shows, "Israel" here must
be defined *not* specifically as the contemporary unbelieving majority itself, but
generally as the *national entity having both a history and a future*. In 11.1-10
Paul returns to his argument of chapter 9 to support his claim that God has not
rejected Israel. The election of a remnant proves that Israel in some sense still
has a gracious place in God's present and future plans, even though at the same
time it highlights the fact that the present hardened mass of Israelites faces final
exclusion from salvation in Christ. 11.11-24 continues to support Paul's con-
tention in verses 1-2 by affirming that at some point in the indefinite,
eschatological future, God will gather the πλήρωμα of unbelieving Israel into
His kingdom. Thus, not only is Israel's rejection not complete (there is a rem-
nant), it is also not final (one day, her status will be reversed -- the rejected
nation will be accepted). In this section, Paul takes his argument to a new
level, adding material previously unconsidered. Hence, we shall now investi-

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[580] Cf. above, 123-24.

gate how Paul's new propositions cohere with what he has already affirmed to this point.

Israel's rejection is not final: To begin with, we must seek to define the subject of verses 11-12. At first glance, this seems simple. The third person plural form of the verbs, the references to τῷ αὐτῶν παραπτώματι (cf. 10.21) and εἰς τὸ παραζηλῶσαι αὐτούς (cf. 10.19), and the implicit contrast with Gentiles to whom salvation has come, all make it clear that the subject must refer back to the οἱ λοιποί of verse 7. But is this mass of unbelieving Israel to be conceived of simply and solely as those individual Jews contemporaneous with Paul who have rejected Christ? Or is Paul using the term more generally in verses 11-16 to denote not just present, unbelieving Israel, but that entity as it continues on into future generations until the eschatological consummation?

In favor of the former interpretation are the following: 1) Paul does not make any obvious categorical distinctions between the present λοιποί and any future group; 2) the natural flow of the text supports the view that Paul must have in mind the same group of hardened individuals in verses 11ff. as he does in verses 7ff.

But there are strong considerations in support of the latter view as well: 1) As we have already shown, in 9.2-3 Paul has already aired his painful conviction that the majority of his kinsmen are ἀνάθεμα, doomed in their unbelief; if Paul were now to assert that these same hardened individuals will finally be saved, he would eviscerate his opening statement and remove the force of the issue which so overwhelmed his emotions and launched him on a defense of God's righteousness in the first place. But if the apostle remains consistent[581] in

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[581] To ascribe such a gross inconsistency to Paul in a section of writing which was obviously the distillation of much of his missionary thinking over the years would be the height of unfairness. For a discussion of Paul's consistency of thought, see appendix below.

his thinking, then it is impossible for him to attribute the future reception of

unbelieving Israel to the present, anathematized generation. Because of this, it

seems there must be an *implicit* categorical distinction between the present

λοιποί and the future Israel which will be saved. 2) The opening question of

verse 11 recalls the imagery of 9.33 and its echoes from Isaiah (28.16; 8.14).

While the immediate application there is to present unbelieving Israel, the form

in which Paul presents his Old Testament support is very open-ended -- by use

of the present tense of τίθημι in conjunction with the "Hebrew genitives"

προσκόμματος and σκανδάλου,[582] verse 33 carries a continuative force; i.e., the

stone being laid is causing and will continue to cause those in Zion to stumble

and fall. 3) Very quickly, by the end of 11.11 and certainly in verses 12 and

15, Paul shifts to a perspective involving the indefinite future, or more specifi-

cally the eschatological consummation. In verse 14 the apostle makes clear that

he hopes through his own ministry to save a few of his contemporary kinsmen,

implying thereby that he does not expect the final consummation to take place

during his lifetime. The picture seems to be that the large majority of presently

hardened Israel will die in their unbelief, but Paul hopes through his ministry to

save some.[583] Thus the pronouns of verses 12, 15 certainly refer to an Israel in

the future that continues in a state of rejection until God graciously receives

them again. This might include some of the present generation of unbelieving

Israelites, but not necessarily -- that would depend on when the final consumma-

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[582] Cf. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, §40, pp. 14-15. Προσκόμμα and σκανδάλον translate נֶגֶף and מִכְשׁוֹל respectively (cf. Is 8.14), both of which are strong verbal nouns. They carry with them a dynamic, active sense and in this context contribute to the image of present stumbling.

[583] Contra Munck, *Paul*, 45-46, who argues unconvincingly that τινές here "means a great number of the chosen people," and indicates the almost complete eschatological salvation of Israel.

tion referred to in verses 12 and 15 were to come to pass. Thus, though on the

face of it the flow of text would seem to imply that Paul must have the same

individuals in mind in verses 11ff. as he does in verses 7ff., the shift to a

future, eschatological perspective as well as Paul's declaration of hope that

through his ministry he might be able to save [only] a few of the present gener-

ation of Israel argue to the contrary.[584]

It seems that in this transitional section we are presented with a defini-

tion of Israel involving both continuity and discontinuity. Israel as a corporate

entity enjoys the continuity of both a theocratic and soteriological election. But

the individuals comprising the nation of Israel in any one generation may or

may not be chosen as part of this elect people in the ultimate sense, depending

on the free decision of God.[585] Hence we find discrete discontinuity within the

general continuity of the people of God (cf. 9.6: "Not all Israel is Israel").

Both the discrete and the general perspectives may be depicted by the term

'Israel'. With this in mind, we may now turn to Paul's question of verse 11.

μὴ ἔπταισαν ἵνα πέσωσιν; -- Paul asks this question only to negate it.

But what exactly does Paul seek to negate? The implied subject here must

certainly be the λοιποί of verse 7. Have the hardened Israelites stumbled so as

to fall? The structure and vocabulary of this sentence present two interpretive

issues to be resolved: 1) the significance of ἵνα; and 2) the meaning of πέσωσιν

in relation to ἔπταισαν.

1) Scholars are divided over whether ἵνα in verse 11 should have telic or

consecutive force. What is clear is that if it is to have a telic sense then the pur-

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[584] J. P. Martin insightfully notes, 307: "Paul's prophetic-apocalyptic form of thought
moves easily between present and future, often to the puzzlement of interpreters."

[585] The prophetic doctrine of the remnant, however, provided an assurance to the
people that God would always maintain the continuity of Israel's existence, even when the bulk
of Israelites turned away from God and incurred the severity of His wrath. Cf. above, 61-64.

pose must be God's.[586] Because of the grammatical awkwardness involved in reading this sense, a number of exegetes take ἵνα here as consecutive, thus dropping the notion of any express purpose and seeing only actual or "contemplated result."[587] Yet since the immediately preceding focus in 11.1-10 has been on God's activity in hardening the λοιποί and since the main emphasis in Paul's argument from the beginning of chapter 9 until now has been the sovereign and purposive activity of God, it seems likely that here ἵνα, which normally carries purposive force, should be understood telically. Further confirmation of this is found in the fact that in the second half of verse 11 Paul lists two other purposes of God as justification for his denial that οἱ λοιποί ἔπταισαν ἵνα πέσωσιν.

2) The aorist subjunctive πέσωσιν may be related to ἔπταισαν in one of two ways: either the two verbs are set in contrast and πίπτω denotes an activity which results in more serious consequences than πταίω, or they function synonymously. The former view is more popular among modern scholars,[588]

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[586] Although grammatically ἵνα should refer back to the subject of the sentence, in this case it would make no sense in Paul's argument for him to ask whether Israel had stumbled out of her desire to fall. Additionally, it would be difficult to see how Paul could envision a large group of individuals (whether ethnically related or not) scattered across the Roman empire jointly purposing any one goal without at the same time positing a greater power behind such a unified response.

[587] SH, 320.

[588] SH, 320, paved the way by pointing to "the contrast between πταίειν and πεσεῖν" and interpreting Paul to mean, "Is their failure of such a character that they will be finally lost, and cut off from the Messianic salvation?". So also Dodd (176), Leenhardt (281), Achtemeier (180), Gundry-Volf (171-2), Dunn (653), Longenecker (102) and Fitzmyer (Romans, 611) are representative of the view that Paul contrasts the present unbelieving state of Israel (as indicated by ἔπταισαν) with the contemplated irreversible and final state of everlasting condemnation (as indicated by πέσωσιν).

A. T. Hanson (Studies, 105-6) likewise sees a contrast, but equates παράπτωμα with παράπτωσις (translated as "prosperity") so as to be able to link Paul's language with the LXX of Dt 32 by way of Jer 22.21. For him, Israel's παράπτωμα is her "culpable carelessness arising from prosperity." This, however, while theologically coherent, seems distant from the argument of Rom 11.

and accords well with ἵνα in a consecutive sense. It interprets Paul's question as: "Has the contemporary mass of non-Christian Jews stumbled (i.e., rejected the gospel) with the result that it should fall (i.e., be eternally condemned)?" The strongest argument in favor of this view is the fact that it is able to take the chain of pronouns in verses 11b-15 at face value, arguing that the same Jews comprising the present unbelieving mass of Israel also comprise the 'rest' who are accepted back by God in the eschatological future. On this reading, Paul's strong denial that the 'rest' has stumbled in unbelief so as to fall irredeemably makes good sense. But this view is not without its problems. To begin with, it contradicts what Paul has already said concerning the eternal destinies of the vast majority of presently hardened Israel;[589] secondly, Paul's hope that through his ministry he might be able to save *some*[590] of his generation (verse 14) indicates by way of corollary that he does not expect many of his generation to come to faith in Christ;[591] thirdly, from the olive tree metaphor we see that the

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[589] Cf. our arguments above concerning Romans 9 and 11.1-10.

[590] Barrett, 215, notes that Paul's hope for the success of his ministry among the Jews seems surprisingly limited. We would argue that this limitation is not surprising at all, given what Paul has said in the last two chapters concerning God's hardening decree and non-election of the majority of Israel, and Israel's subsequently resolute unbelief in the face of the gospel.

Käsemann (306) and Rese ("Rettung," 428) argue that Paul intentionally employs "diplomatic caution" while addressing the Roman Gentile Christians concerning the success of the Jewish mission. This seems unlikely to us for two reasons: 1) from Paul's opening statement in 9.2f., it is clear that he views the large proportion of Israel as unresponsive to the gospel -- and this after many years of work on the mission field; and 2) the account of Paul's mission work in Acts supports a straightforward reading of this text -- Paul had limited success in reaching the Jews. Much more reasonable, therefore, is the view that Paul means exactly what he says at this point.

[591] Gundry-Volf, 172, argues that Paul's longing to save some of his fellow Israelites shows that he does not consider the hardened majority to be permanently excluded from salvation. This is not necessarily so, however. Paul is certainly not unmindful of the example provided by his own experience -- as one who had been a staunch enemy of the early church and part of the hardened majority for a time, he recognizes that there are certainly some individuals within recalcitrant Israel who, like himself, have been called/chosen in advance by God and hence will respond positively to the message of the gospel at some point in their lifetime. And the fact that Paul envisions such a relatively small number being saved through his ministry seems to support the view that he did view the present hardened majority (with a few exceptions) as ultimately excluded from salvation rather than the reverse.

broken off branches which do not finally respond to the gospel in faith will

ultimately be cast off forever (this is the ἀποτομία of God which Paul

emphasizes in verse 22).[592] The fact that Paul can appeal to the harshness of

judgment awaiting those who have been broken off in their unbelief, even after

he has spoken of the full, future incorporation of unbelieving Israel in verses

12-15, suggests that Paul apparently did not include the mass of present day

Israel in his determinations of the composition of future, redeemed Israel.[593]

The second view of the relationship of πίπτω to πταίω in verse 11 is

free from these objections. By reading these two verbs as virtually

synonymous, it interprets Paul's question to mean: "Is the reason for con-

temporary unbelieving Israel's stumbling [only] its ultimate and eternal fall?"

Paul's μὴ γένοιτο then becomes the springboard to articulate God's other pur-

poses or aims in the downfall of contemporary Israel. The following may be

said in favor of this interpretation: 1) the basic meaning of the two verbs is the

same, though πταίω in addition carries the nuance of stumbling against some-

thing.[594] 2) Paul is clearly picking up the stumbling imagery of 9.33,[595] and in

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[592] Unbelieving Israel is used in the olive tree metaphor as a warning to the Gentile church to beware of unbelief among its own members. It is contemplation of the terrible end awaiting those who finish their days in unbelief which should spur Gentile Christians not to emulate their Jewish contemporaries in pride and arrogance, but with humility and fear trust Him who alone can save and include them in the people of God.

[593] It is certainly true that Paul seems to leave a "window of opportunity" for his con-temporary unbelieving kinsmen by asserting in verse 23 that those who do not persist in their unbelief will be grafted back into the people of God, for God is able to do bring this about. But he falls far short of declaring that God will reingraft the majority of those branches presently broken off. It seems more likely that Paul wishes to make room in Gentile minds and hearts for a hospitable reception of those relatively few Jews such as himself who for years remain stub-born in their opposition to the gospel but finally respond to the electing call of Christ.

[594] So K. L. Schmidt, TDNT 6:883. Cf. also LSJ, πταίω, s.v.,II.

[595] Although in 9.32-3 Paul does not employ the verb πταίω, but rather the parallel προσκόπτειν, the metaphorical meaning is much the same. The usage of προσκόπτειν is evoked by the imagery within the Old Testament quotation of a stone over which the foot trips.

the immediately preceding context he gives clear indication that only a small remnant of Israel shall be saved (verses 27-29) for the majority have not attained righteousness but have tripped and fallen over the stone, which is Christ. 3) Most scholars rightly associate unbelieving Israel's παράπτωμα in verse 11b with their stumbling in 11a. The two terms express the same action. This, coupled with the fact that παράπτωμα finds its lexical root in in πίπτω, suggests that Paul did not intend a strong distinction between πταίω and πίπτω. 4) Paul uses πίπτω later in verse 22 to speak not of a "contemplated" event, but of the reality that has already come about (present Israel's being cut off from the tree because of her unbelief) which leads to further, ultimate consequences; this usage in fairly close context supports the argument that the apostle sees πίπτω and πταίω as virtual synonyms. 5) Finally, and most importantly, this interpretation makes better sense of the immediately following argument in 11b: Paul denies that God's *only* purpose in contemporary Israel's rejection is her ἀπώλεια, and in defense of this denial he offers two other divine intentions: the reception of the Gentiles into the company of the redeemed, and consequently the incitement to jealousy of unbelieving Israel so as to cause a large-scale return of the rejected mass in the last days.[596]

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[596] The central thrust of the overall argument in 9-11 is that God's purposes have not failed, in spite of appearances. In 11.11ff. Paul makes clear that even the harsh activity of God serves a good, merciful end. The hardening of present-day Israel serves as a foil against which God's mercy to the Gentiles (present and future) as well as to future Israel may be highlighted. This does not mean, *pace* Cranfield (556), that the hardening of contemporary Israel spoken of in verse 7 has the salvation of those hardened individuals as its ultimate purpose any more than the hardening of Pharaoh referred to in 9.17 could be imagined to have the salvation of Pharaoh as its purpose. Rather, in the same way that the hardening of Pharaoh served for the benefit of Israel and not for himself, so the hardening of the present mass of Israel serves for the benefit of the Gentiles and *future* Israel, and not for the rejected mass itself. Here Paul is working out with specific reference to hardened Israel the principle he outlined in summary form in 9.22-3: "God, desiring to show his wrath and make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy, which he prepared beforehand for glory" -- not only from the Jews (the remnant plus future Israel) but also from the Gentiles.

This interpretation, however, faces one major objection -- it cannot take at face value the seemingly consistent link Paul makes in verses 11-15 between those Israelites who have presently fallen and those who in the end will be received back into the fold. But as we have already noted concerning Paul's usage of the term 'Israel' in 11.11ff.,[597] the apostle thinks of Israel in both discontinuous and continuous ways. And as he shifts from speaking of Israel in the definite present to Israel in the indefinite future, this vital distinction of category becomes blurred though not erased. The discrete, discontinuous Israel of Paul's day is the subject of verses 11-12b. This is the group of individuals who remain hardened in unbelief and destined to final judgment and destruction. Continuous Israel (Israel as the people of God chosen and blessed in the past, to whom salvific promises were made which are in turn extended to her descendants [= the children of promise of 9.8f.]) is the subject of verses 12c,15-16, all of which serve to shift the readers' vision toward the eschatological future.[598] It is this key distinction which makes sense of 11.11 in light of its immediately preceding and following contexts, together with Paul's declarations in 9.2-3, 6-23, 27-29.

Thus, although neither interpretation of the relationship of πίπτω to πταίω is without its difficulties, the second view faces fewer stumbling blocks

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[597] Cf. above, 213-16.

[598] It is not necessary for our deliberations to determine exactly what Paul meant in verse 15 by ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν. Commentators differ over whether this should be seen metaphorically/spiritually as a climactic outflow of grace in conversion of the world upon Israel's return to the fold, or more concretely as a reference to the bodily resurrection which serves as a harbinger of the end of this age and entrance into the full blessings of God. We would agree with Cranfield (562-3) that the phrase must intend "...something surpassing everything denoted by σωτηρία in v. 11, by πλοῦτος κόσμου and πλοῦτος ἐθνῶν in v. 12, and by καταλλαγή κόσμου in the present verse", and thus mean more than the spiritual blessings already being enjoyed by Gentile Christians. Paul's view is that "...the πρόσλημψις of the mass of Israel can signify nothing less than the final consummation of all things."

In any case, there is a consensus among scholars that with this phrase Paul is pointing to the indefinite future immediately prior to if not identical with "the final consummation of all things."

of its own and fits the immediate as well as broader contexts better, and so is to

be preferred.

Before turning to the consecrated nature of the descendants of Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob in olive tree metaphor in verses 17-24, a word must be said

about verse 16, which serves as a transitional thought between the future, merci-

ful plan of God toward Israel in verse 15 and the present hardening activity in

her midst portrayed by the broken-off branches of the olive tree in verses 17-24.

Paul employs two customary images in verse 16 to indicate the relation

to the patriarchs[599] themselves. Because the source of Israel is holy, that which

proceeds from the source must be holy. This means that Israel as an entity,

though unbelieving at present, is consecrated before God, and will enjoy the

future outlined by Paul in the immediately preceding verses. But does this

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[599] Determination of the exact nature of the referent indicated by ἀπαρχή and ῥίζα is
not crucial for our purposes here. Scholars are divided as to whether Paul meant 1) the
patriarchs (cf. Cambier, 247) or, more specifically, Abraham (cf. 1 Enoch 93.5), 2) the Jewish
Christian remnant, or 3) Jesus Christ. In favor of the first is the fact that Paul voices this exact
thought later on in verse 28. Option 2 remains possible, because Paul does appeal early in chap-
ter 11 to the existence of the Jewish Christian remnant as a sign that God has not rejected Israel
completely. Yet the emphasis in 11.2-10 is that the remnant serves as a sign of God's faithful-
ness to His promise to Israel rather than as a source from which sanctification spreads to the rest
of unbelieving Israel. The third option, while theologically attractive, is highly unlikely in this
context (pace Hanson, Studies 108-25). Paul does not directly mention Christ at all in this chap-
ter -- the only possible allusions, other than this highly doubtful one, are verse 26 which con-
tains the Isaiah 59.20 quote where Paul most likely interprets "the Deliverer" messianically and
verse 28 where Paul mentions the gospel in relation to Israel of the present age. It would be a
wild leap of interpretation to insert the thought of Christ as first-fruits (cf. 1 Cor. 15.20) in a
context which demonstrates no Christological leanings at all, particularly when a more con-
textually obvious interpretation so readily presents itself (cf. 9.5, 6-13; 11.28). Cranfield (564-
5) and Leenhardt (285-6) wish to take ἡ ἀπαρχή as referring to the Jewish Christians and ἡ ῥίζα
as pointing to the patriarchs.

Rengstorf, 128-32, argues that ἀπαρχή points back to Adam rather than to the
patriarchs, since this is the sense it typically has in Jewish tradition. But Paul is not limited by
Jewish tradition, and a reference to Adam here, while not impossible, is highly improbably in
light of the immediate context.

What is important for our discussion is that regardless of the meaning of 'lump' and
'root', Israel as an entity is viewed as sanctified (ἀγία) on the basis of its natural relationship to
the sanctified source. However, as Fitzmyer (Romans, 614) notes, "...the individual branches
have to remain in close connection with the stock and the root to enjoy the same holy character."

therefore mean that Paul's unbelieving contemporaries will finally be saved

because they belong to the sanctified *ethnos* of Israel?[600]

This cannot be Paul's meaning, as is made patently clear by the next

verse in which Paul speaks of some of the natural branches (ἅγιοι though they

are) having been broken off from the olive tree (representing the true people of

God) and consequently facing divine wrath.[601] It is true, as Murray says, that

"there cannot be irremediable rejection of Israel; the holiness of theocratic con-

secration is not abolished and will one day be vindicated in Israel's fulness and

restoration."[602] But, as Paul seems to make clear in 9.6-29, 11.2-10,17-24,

there can be and indeed is an irremediable rejection of individual Israelites, and

apparently of many in Paul's own day, a reality which causes his heart great

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[600] This in turn raises the question of compatibility with what Paul has already so strongly asserted in 9.6-13. If Paul is here saying that being an Israelite carries special salvific privileges simply because one is connected by natural descent to the patriarchs and therefore a necessary recipient of the fulfillment of God's covenant promises, then he must acknowledge, in contradiction to 9.6-13, that the descendants of Abraham *can* establish a human claim upon God's elective purposes. That is, if being ἅγιοι is identical with or leads necessarily to salvation, then Paul's contemporary kinsmen could indeed point to their lineage and thus make a human claim upon God. The fact that Mt 3.8-9 can record John the Baptist as warning Jewish leaders, "Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham," indicates that such a position was not unknown among first century Jews. But such a stance Paul explicitly denounces in 9.6-13 by differentiating between children of promise and children of descent, and linking the beneficiaries of the promise to God's own sovereign call and independent decision. So Dodd (179) can say, "It is difficult to reconcile this principle, as it is here applied [11.16], with Paul's strenuous denial in earlier parts of the epistle that descent from Abraham gives any right to the inheritance of his blessing." But as we shall attempt to show below, it is not Paul's meaning that the con-secration of Israel as an entity necessitates the salvation of every individual Jew, or even of the majority of Jews in any one generation. Thus, the ultimate fate of every individual still rests in the sovereign choice of God either to have mercy or to harden. Perhaps we may see a parallel between what Paul declares in 11.16 of the consecration of all Israel (including present unbeliev-ing Israel) and what he affirmed in 9.4-5 -- that the great spiritual privileges of the past belong even still to contemporary, obstinate Israel. And as in 9.6-13 where Paul argues that in spite of this not all Israel is "true" Israel, so also in 11.17-24 he makes clear that not all the consecrated branches remain part of the consecrated tree.

[601] Cf. below, 224-303, for our discussion of the fate of the broken off branches and Paul's conscious provision of a loophole by which individuals within the hardened mass of pre-sent Israel may return and be reingrafted to the tree.

[602] Murray, II:85.

grief.

Let us now proceed to verses 17-24 for a closer look at what this unit may reveal about the question of election. One must recognize straightaway that Paul's purpose in this section is **not** primarily to provide teaching regarding the immediate future of Israel but rather to deliver a stern warning to Gentile believers in Rome against both arrogance and impertinence toward unbelieving Israelites.[603] By taking up a proud, self-congratulatory stance against fallen Israel, Gentile Christians draw perilously close to the precipice of unbelief and hence of ultimate destruction. Thus Paul is concerned to warn this group about the profound danger they face, and to exhort them to humble faith and healthy fear.[604]

That this, as opposed to a declaration of the certainty of Israel's return to God, is Paul's overriding purpose in this section may be demonstrated by the following details:

1) Consistently throughout 11.17-24 (but *only here* in all of Romans 9-11) Paul addresses his readers (or a particular subgroup of them, i.e., the Gentile believers belonging to the church in Rome) in the second person

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[603] Gundry-Volf (174) declares that in 11.16-24 Paul uses extended metaphor to illustrate how Israel's hardening and present exclusion can and will be reversed. SH (330) likewise see verses 17-22 as secondary to the main subject of the section, i.e., the return of the Jews to God's redeemed community.

Baxter and Ziesler argue that Paul understood the image of a wild scion grafted on to a cultured tree as a rejuvenating influence on the tree, thereby implying that this metaphor "is used primarily to stress God's intention to save Israel" (29). But as we attempt to show below, this view both misreads Paul's primary intention in this section and overstates what Paul does say regarding present-day Israel.

For the view that Paul utilized the imagery of ingrafting wild branches to "a rich and living tree" to assert that Gentiles were now benefiting from the vitality of historic Israel, cf. Oesterreicher, 322-23.

[604] R. B. Hays' suggestion (*Echoes of Scripture*, 61) that Paul's use of the phrase "God did not spare" with reference to unbelieving Israel evidences a deliberate repetition of 8.32 and thus reinterprets "the fate of Israel Christologically" is alluring, but without warrant contextually. Paul's purpose here is to warn arrogant Gentiles of the fate *that could befall them*, not to draw attention to the vicarious suffering of Israel on their behalf.

singular. The effect of this rhetorical technique is to personalize the force of what he has to say and thus enhance the effect of his warning and exhortation. That Paul continues this device throughout this section strongly endorses the view that Paul's main purpose in this context is exhortative rather than didactic or revelatory.

2) Syntactically, the imperatival clauses of verses 18a-c and 20d stand as the paramount directives for which verses 18d-20c and 21-24 respectively argue. It is the commands of this section which make clear Paul's intent: the Gentile Christians are not to boast over fallen Israel or harbor any ill-will toward that nation, nor are they to wallow in pride as if their incorporation into the people of God depended somehow on their own personal merit rather than simply receiving God's mercy in Christ. One may readily see how appeal to the fact that God is able to bring Israel back to Himself (verses 23-24) would serve to support Paul's exhortation against Gentile arrogance. But the reverse cannot be said. The commands not to boast or be proud over against Israel cannot be said to offer support for the statement that God is able to reingraft broken off Israel to the holy stock.

3) Up to now in Rom 9-11 Paul's argumentation has been concisely argued and closely reasoned. It would seem highly out of character for him suddenly to introduce a section in which the argument for his main point occupies only the last few lines of a substantial paragraph and is preceded by material which bears little direct relation to it. From a stylistic point of view, the arrangement of material in verses 17-24 favors the position that Paul's primary intention here is exhortative.

4) The probable situation of the Roman church with regard to Jewish-Gentile relations[605] as well as passages within the epistle itself (cf. chapters 14-

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[605] Cf. Donfried, Karl P. <ed>, *The Romans Debate* (1991).

15) lend cogency to the view that Paul would take advantage of the points he has been making (in 11.1-16) to drive home to a largely Gentile audience that they must not despise their fellow Jewish Christians or even the relatively large, unbelieving Jewish element throughout the Empire. To assert that Paul's main purpose in 11.17-24 is other than exhortative is to commit the fallacy of seeing Paul as more of a theologian than a pastor. Indeed, the apostle was both, and in this section he seizes the opportunity afforded by his subject to charge Gentile readers with greater humility and forbearance.

If we grant, then, that Paul's principal purpose in this section is admonitory, we must also acknowledge that whatever the apostle says having to do with election in these verses will most likely serve to further this purpose. Thus, it is natural that in dealing with the issue of arrogance in those within the church Paul should point out that this same sin led to the exclusion from salvation of the present majority of Jews. And if this is not enough to discourage Gentile members of the church at Rome from condescending pride, the apostle proceeds to point out that the only thing which keeps rejected Jews from God's blessing is their unbelief, just as faith in Christ is all that maintains his Gentile audience in God's goodness. To deflate their haughtiness further, Paul declares that God is able and willing to reingraft unbelieving Jews to the true stock as they turn from their unbelief.

It seems beyond doubt that Paul is thinking of contemporary, unbelieving Israelites when he speaks of the possibility of reingrafting broken off branches. Verse 17 makes clear Paul's conception of the breaking off of "some"[606]

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[606] SH (327) and Cranfield (566) are correct to see τινές in verse 17 as an example of *meiosis* or *litotes*. With Paul's emphasis lying later in the sentence, he deliberately understates the size of the group of Israelites broken off from the olive tree representing the true people of God.

of the natural branches as a past event linked temporally with the responsiveness

of his Gentile readers to the gospel and their reception into the people of

God.[607] The implication of verse 20 is that their unbelief is reflected in their

rejection of the gospel, and verse 23 with its use of the present tense

(ἐπιμένωσιν) shows beyond doubt that Paul is speaking of contemporary

Israelites who presently belong to the hardened mass. Does this then mean,

after all, that Paul does not consider the hardened mass to be condemned to

destruction? Are verses 23-24 a softening or even repudiation of the position

Paul first voiced so powerfully and sadly in chapter 9 that the majority of his

kinsmen were vessels of wrath predestined for destruction?

Such a conclusion does not seem warranted[608] for the following reasons:

1) Since Paul's purpose is admonitory, his appeal to the reinstatement of pre-

sently hardened Israelites serves primarily to combat Gentile arrogance and the

assumption that God must have "written off" the Jewish race forever, rather

than to paint a hopeful picture of what will happen to *contemporary* Israel.[609]

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[607] If ἐν αὐτοῖς is taken to mean "in their place" (i.e., that of the broken off branches) rather than "among them" (i.e., the remaining, faithful Jewish believers), then this association is strengthened even more. The fact that αὐτοῖς finds no explicit referent in the context other than τινες τῶν κλάδων supports this view. But cf. Meyer, 223, and Cranfield, 567, who opt for the latter meaning in light of the compound συγκοινωνός immediately following. Donaldson, 92-94, argues persuasively that Paul's logic in this section involves not "...the spatial logic of dis-placement but the temporal logic of delay" (94). In any case, the broken off branches are viewed as contemporaneous with the remaining Jewish branches as well as the ingrafted Gentile ones. Cf. also H. W. Schmidt, 194, for the view that only those branches (individuals) remain which have been previously chosen by God.

[608] *Pace* Mussner (*Tractate*, 31).

[609] It is possible to view ἐὰν μὴ ἐπιμένωσιν τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ as an unreal condition, and so to argue that Paul did not believe any of the hardened group would repent, but that if they had, God would have received them back. Such a view would make it easy to reconcile this passage with the view of divine hardening to destruction which Paul puts forward in chapter 9. However, in our opinion, such an interpretation does not seem likely, for in the end it would militate against Paul's expressed intention of weakening Gentile pride by allowing Gentile Christians to argue that the fact that no hardened Israelites could in practice repent would demonstrate God's severity and wrath towards this group as opposed to the Gentiles.

2) Paul does **not** state here that God *will* unreservedly receive all or even most of the presently hardened Israelites back to Himself but only those who fulfill the condition of individual repentance.[610] Taken in isolation, this statement could embody either a large or small percentage of the hardened mass brought to faith in Christ. But in light of all that Paul has said to this point, it hardly seems likely that Paul could envision anything other than the conversion of a relatively few individuals among his contemporary kinsmen. 3) Paul's reference to both the kindness and severity of God indicates the lasting blessings of Christ on those who continue in faith as well as the profound and eternal consequences (ἐκκοπῇσῃ) for those who remain in unbelief. The warning to arrogant Gentiles in the church that their pride could lead them into unbelief and hence to face the ἀποτομία of God gains real force only if the fate awaiting those outside Christ is eschatological judgment. This further supports our contention that Paul considers the large majority of contemporary Israel (less any who repent) as consigned to ultimate destruction.

Thus, Paul cannot be said to hold out hope in verses 17-24 that the majority of presently hardened Israel will be saved. It is no argument against this that Paul indeed does hint at the possibility of a small number within the larger Jewish populace coming to faith in Christ (verse 14 makes it clear that he is pulling out all stops to make his ministry as effective as possible for the benefit of responsive Jews as well as Gentiles). Certainly the apostle would not

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[610] The πόσῳ μᾶλλον of verse 24 serves to emphasize God's willingness to reingraft repentant Israelites -- if God was willing to ingraft believers from the Gentile world to whom He had not given such wonderful privileges and promises (cf. 9.4-5), how much more willing must He be to receive back believing Jews, to whose ancestors He had bound Himself in love. The "how much more" reflects the same willingness encapsulated in Isa 65.2 which Paul has already quoted in 10.21: "All day long I held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

F. Dreyfus ("Le passé," 144) rightly points out that "Paul évite délibérément d'appliquer à l'Israël de l'ancienne alliance considéré dans son ensemble le vocabulaire spécifique de l'élection." Instead, the apostle sees divine election as a personal call applying fundamentally to the individual. Cf. also Refoulé ("Cohérence," 75).

claim to have canvassed the entire Jewish race spread throughout the Roman Empire, and even of those Jews who had already heard the gospel and responded unfavorably, Paul could still envision that at least a few[611] might have their hearts softened by God. After all, he himself was a prime example of a Jew who had resisted the kerygma with determination and fury until his own conversion. Since God had transformed even Paul's flinty heart, it was entirely possible that within contemporary, hardened Israel some still recalcitrant Jews might yet turn to faith in Christ. The apostle would no doubt support the notion that the full number of the present remnant of believing Israelites had not yet been counted.

But how can this fervent hope for the salvation of some of his hardened brothers according to the flesh harmonize with what Paul has already taught in Romans 9 concerning the election of some to salvation and the hardening of others to destruction, and his clear inference there that the majority of his kinsfolk were doomed to destruction as vessels of wrath? Paul himself does not seek to answer this question in Romans 11, but from the perspective of his larger argument a reply is not difficult to formulate.

In 9.11 Paul has made clear his view that God's elective purposes for Jacob and Esau predated their birth and thus determined the course of both their destinies. That he understands this as a general principle applying to humanity

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[611] No doubt Paul's missionary experience as well as his understanding of God's dealings with Israel throughout the Old Testament helped shape his understanding that the majority of his Jewish kinsfolk had been hardened by God. Perhaps it was in the face of such widespread and sometimes hostile rejection by the Jews that Paul slowly came to the conclusion that this deep and pervasive stubbornness must be the work of God, and not merely the determination of each individual or group with whom he spoke. Yet never could he forget that he, too, had once been hardened, and though God's general purpose was the irreversible hardening of many in Israel, yet in His merciful purposes God was sparing a remnant, and no doubt some presently unbelieving Jews had been singled out by God's grace and would come to faith at some future point in their lives. Thus, Paul can maintain his hope for the salvation of a relatively small number of the his rebellious contemporaries.

in general may be seen from 9.22-23, where both the vessels of wrath and those of mercy are spoken of as having been prepared beforehand for their respective destinies of destruction or glory.[612] Paul also affirms (particularly in chapters 1-3) that all human beings begin their lives in (or at least at some point early in their lives fall into) a state of rebellion against God (cf. Rom 3.9-12,23)[613] and continue in this condition indefinitely. For those individuals chosen to salvation, however, God's electing purpose manifests itself in their lives at some point and brings about a transformation from unbelief and rebellion to faith and humility before God. It is God's prior choice and activity of grace which enables individuals to respond positively to the message of the gospel. Though Paul viewed the majority of Jews in his day as hardened by God, yet he recognized that God had not rejected all Israelites, and so looked in hope for the turnabout of some of his kinsfolk from their stubbornness. The conversion of those who did turn Paul would no doubt attribute to the prior electing activity of God. For Paul this ongoing process of the unfolding of God's sovereign and glorious plan, ἡ κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ, has been in effect at least from the time of the patriarchs and will continue until the climactic and extraordinary ingathering of ethnic Israel at the consummation of the age. To this future event Paul turns his attention in the next and concluding subsection of his deliberations, 11.25-32.

3.2. Summary: Election in 11.11-24

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[612] Cf. above, 169-79.

[613] Whether or not one accepts Ephesians as directly Pauline, there is no doubt that 2.1-4 expresses a very Pauline thought: all have sinned (verse 3) and are τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς and υἱοὶ τῆς ἀπειθείας. Yet this does not negate the declarations already made in Eph 1.4-13 concerning the predestination of God's people to "live for the praise of His glory" (1.12). The two thoughts are not antithetical.

In this section, Paul continues to support his contention that God has not cast off His people by arguing that though real, Israel's rejection is not final. Difficulties of interpretation have plagued this section because Paul seems to think of Israel in both a continuous and discontinuous sense, but does not generally make his meaning explicit except by a rapidly shifting context. We have attempted to show that the clearest coherent interpretation necessitates a critical distinction between the present λοιποί who are being hardened to destruction (Israel in the discrete, discontinuous sense) and the future Israel (Israel as ἔθνος in the continuous sense) which will be saved in the eschaton.

Paul maintains that presently hardened Israel has stumbled so as to fall into destruction, but that her fall was not God's sole and final purpose. Rather, through this occurrence salvation has come to the Gentiles and as a result of this turn of events, future Israel will be provoked to salvation in Christ as well.

The olive tree metaphor in verses 17-24 does not provide the confirmation some have sought for the view that Paul believed in the future salvation of the mass of presently hardened Israelites. Rather, Paul's major intent in this vignette is to warn Gentile members of the church in Rome against arrogance toward the fallen Jews, lest the same pride which led Israel to unbelief also serve to unseat them from their faith. In verses 23-24, Paul highlights the possibility of the return of hardened Israelites to the fold on the condition of their repudiation of unbelief. Consistent with his purpose in verses 17-22, Paul's intent here is to further puncture Gentile pride, rather than to paint a hopeful picture of present Israel's substantial return to faith. The fact that the apostle nowhere asserts in this section anything more than the possibility of repentance among hardened Israelites along with the implication of verse 14 that Paul did not expect many of his hardened contemporaries to turn to Christ strengthens this argument. Paul does not hold out hope for a return of the *majority* of presently hardened Israelites, though he does hint at the possibility of the conver-

sion of a relatively small number from that group to Christ as the gospel continues to be proclaimed.

Though it was not Paul's purpose in 11.17-24 to provide his readers with a doctrine of election but rather to exhort them to humble, God-fearing faith, we noted in passing how Paul's assertions here can cohere with the view he put forth in Romans 9 concerning the sovereign, divine election of individuals to salvation or wrath prior to their birth or to any activity on their part. For Paul, as for Qumran, the electing activity of God always precedes and conditions human response. Whether an individual finally turns toward or away from God in faith or unbelief respectively depends on whether and/or when God brings to effect His electing grace in the life of the particular person in question. Thus it is not difficult to see how Paul could maintain both that God chooses with regard to the salvation of the individual and that the individual must choose as well.[614]

Similarly, the apostle is not interested in answering the question (implied by his exhortation in verses 17-24) of how elect individuals may be able to fall away from salvation in Christ. Paul writes to those who have aligned themselves with Christ; in 9.23-4 he includes believing Gentiles among the vessels of mercy whom God has called and prepared beforehand for glory. But in 11.20-22 he warns Gentiles that if they do not resist unbelief, they will face the wrath rather than the kindness of God and end up severed from the people of God. However, two factors must be considered in weighing these seemingly contradictory views between Romans 9 and 11. First, Paul's different goals in each section cause him to emphasize opposite sides of the same coin. The apostle's design in 9.22ff. is to demonstrate that God's sovereign, electing activity

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[614] Cf. our discussion of election, predestination and free will at Qumran, 101-114 above.

demonstrates His righteousness and shows Him to be faithful to His purposes, while in 11.20ff., due to the dangerous attitude among some of his readers, Paul accentuates the responsibility of human beings to trust God and exhibit the virtues characteristic of that trust: humility and healthy fear. To affirm the security of God's people in the electing grace of God at this point would be counterproductive. Secondly, Paul has already introduced the principle of a mass of "true" believers within the larger body of "the people of God" (cf. 9.6a). It involves no mental gymnastics to suppose that if Paul were to address this question head on he might easily make use of this concept to argue that only those who continued in faith were genuine Christians, i.e., the elect vessels of mercy.[615] In the same way as not all who constitute ethnic Israel are true Israel, so also not all who join the Church are true Christians.

In any event, Paul does not deal with these systematic questions raised by his hortatory words. Yet in the midst of his pastoral concern, he does not forget the pressing issue of Israel's position before God. In 11.11-24 Paul has affirmed that in spite of the hardening of the majority of contemporary Israel, God's rejection of the nation of Israel is not final. In 11.25-32, he will proceed to clinch his argument (and assail any vestiges of Gentile superiority by revealing the merciful future God has ordained for Israel at the end of the age).

4. Romans 11.25-32: An Introduction

In this concluding section, Paul brings his argument to a sweeping climax by revealing a mystery concerning the triumphant mercy of God which leads to the final salvation of Israel (as well as the Gentiles) in the eschaton.

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[615] This is essentially identical to the argument found in 1 Jn 2.19. There the author is concerned to explain how and why it is that some who once were a part of the fellowship have now left the fold and denounced it: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us...."

The apostle continues to target Gentile Christian arrogance, as is evident by his

opening words in verse 25 (Οὐ γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ μυστήριον

τοῦτο, ἵνα μὴ ἦτε παρ' ἑαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι...)[616] and his overwhelming emphasis

on the ultimacy of God's mercy for the nation of Israel. This crowning design

of God, demonstrating the election of Israel which is "beloved for the sake of

the fathers," proves beyond doubt that God has not rejected Israel whom He

foreknew, and thus has a double effect: it completely undercuts any vestige of

Gentile conceit, and it clinches conclusively Paul's central argument of Romans

9-11 first voiced in 9.6a that God's word has not failed -- i.e., regarding Israel

and the gospel God remains faithful to His promises of old.

4.1. Election in Romans 11.25-32

Paul once again acknowledges the divine hardening of Israel with regard

to the gospel, but now he draws aside the curtains hiding the stage on which

God's future plans for Israel will unfold, and reveals with more precision than

heretofore what will transpire in the eschatological future: πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ

σωθήσεται (verse 26b).[617] His conviction concerning the future salvation of 'all

Israel' rests upon the unshakeable fact of God's election of the people as a

race,[618] as well as the compelling content of the mystery which has been

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[616] The γάρ of verse 25 connects this following section with verses 17-24 as a whole as well as with verse 24 in particular. Paul's purpose continues to be the quashing of Gentile pride (the theme of 11.17-24), which he accomplishes here through the revelation of God's plan to reingraft future Israel to the patriarchal stock after the divine decree of the hardening of Israel has been rescinded.

Calvin, 254, correctly notes that the causal particle ἵνα μή shows Paul's purpose to be the restraint of Gentile insolence and the prevention of any exultation over the present plight of the Jews.

[617] So Gundry-Volf, 177: "With a specificity and clarity greater than in his previous statements, here he [Paul] claims that 'all Israel will be saved' (11.26a)."

[618] Leenhardt, 292, similarly declares that Paul's belief in the election of Israel leads him to a belief in the final conversion of Israel.

revealed to him. Below we shall consider in turn the content of the mystery

which Paul shares in verses 25-27, the meaning of ἐκλογή in verse 28, and

Paul's final conclusion in verses 30-32.

4.1.1. The mystery which Paul unveils:

There is now a general scholarly consensus that for Paul, μυστήριον

means not a secret body of knowledge to be kept from the uninitiated,[619] but

rather a *revelation* by God of something which would otherwise be unknowable

by the human mind. Generally, its content concerns the saving plan of God.

Here specifically, it entails "an unfolding eschatological reality."[620] The ques-

tion of whether Paul is here imparting a special revelation he himself received

or rather a more general truth discerned from Old Testament passages viewed

through the lens of the gospel need not concern us.[621] What is of importance is

the content of the mystery Paul unveils to his readers.

This mystery is composed of three elements:[622] 1) a hardening has come

in part (ἀπὸ μέρους)[623] upon Israel; 2) the hardening remains in force only until

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[619] Here Paul parts company with the Qumranians. For while the Essenic community studied the divine mysteries received through revelation and held them in strict secrecy (cf. 80-82 above), Paul seeks to make them known to any who would listen.

[620] Getty, "Paul and the Salvation of Israel," 458. Cf. also J. Coppens, "'Mystery'," 132-58.

[621] Though it is true Paul claimed to have received prophetic revelations in the course of his ministry, he does not claim any unique 'copyright' for this material, either that it is new information, or truth disclosed only to him. Murray (II:92) notes that Paul's appeal to the Old Testament for confirmation shows that this truth was not completely absent from the Hebrew scriptures, and argues that the present focus is more on fullness and clarity of revelation than on new, seminal insights. Cranfield, 574, likewise argues that "...it can be maintained not unreasonably that the contents of this mystery are to be discerned in the OT seen in light of the gospel events." Cf. also Luz, 289; Hübner, 121; Hofius, "Evangelium," 322-24; Holtz, 290.

[622] So Cranfield, 574-5; Fitzmyer, 861; Hvalvik, 97; *pace* Meyer (230) and Holtz (291), who argue that the mystery contains only the truth that the duration of the hardening of Israel will not be permanent.

[623] The phrase ἀπὸ μέρους should be taken adverbially as a modifier of γέγονεν (so Meyer, 230; Hübner, 110 n386; Wilckens 2:254 n1141; Schlier, 339; Hofius, "Evangelium,"

the πλήρωμα of the Gentiles has entered in to the kingdom of God;[624] and 3) in

a final display of God's merciful purpose, all Israel will be saved. This last ele-

ment is what Paul wishes to emphasize, as is clear both by his stated desire in

verse 25 to puncture Gentile conceit and by the Old Testament quotations of

verses 26b and 27, which apply specifically to the eschatological salvation of

Israel.

Paul has already spoken of God's hardening activity in 9.18 and 11.7,

and as we have considered those passages in detail elsewhere, we need say

nothing further here. Instead, we shall briefly consider questions raised by the

second and third elements of this mystery Paul has revealed.

There can be no doubt that ἄχρι οὗ contributes a temporal sense[625] to

Paul's meaning in verse 25, although it may further imply purpose. Since Paul

has taken great pains throughout Romans 9-11 to show God's purpose behind

the various movements of salvation history, and since he has already shown

himself interested not just in the temporal sequence of events concerning Israel

and the Gentile mission but also their logical interrelationships (cf. 11.11-16), it

is likely that he has the same view here.[626] Thus Israel remains hardened until

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312; Cranfield, 575), not adjectivally in reference to πώρωσις (so Barrett, 223; Käsemann,
313). Both the fact that the prepositional phrase functions more naturally in an adverbial than
adjectival way as well as the grammatical peculiarity that anarthrous nouns rarely take succeed-
ing prepositional phrases as modifiers (cf. BDF §272) support this view. Understood as an
adverbial phrase here, ἀπὸ μέρους allows for both of Paul's earlier points concerning the har-
dening of Israel to be gathered together in summary -- a hardening has come in part upon Israel:
i.e., it has come partially (upon a subset of ethnic Israel) and temporarily. Concerning temporal
aspect, cf. Plag, 36-37.

[624] The linkage of Israel's hardening with the salvation of many Gentiles serves as a
further means to keep Gentile Christians from a stance of superiority or condescension.

[625] Although ἄχρι οὗ can mean "as long as, while" (cf. BAGD, s.v., 2.a.), such a
sense in verse 25 is rendered impossible by the aorist subjunctive εἰσέλθῃ. Paul's emphasis is
not that Israel's hardening continues during the time that the Gentile mission is being fulfilled,
but rather that her hardening lasts only until the Gentile mission has been completed and the
πλήρωμα of the nations has come in.

[626] Gundry-Volf, 178, writes: "It is thus correct to see a final aspect in ἄχρι οὗ and
translate: 'until the reaching of the goal when.'" (So also Jeremias, "Beobachtungen," 196;

such time as the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; this latter event then acts

as a trigger within God's purposes to remove Israel's hardness of heart.[627]

How are we to understand τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν, which signals the

onset of God's final act of mercy and faithfulness to all Israel?[628] Scholars are

generally agreed that τὸ πλήρωμα must signify a numerical quantity,[629] refer-

Hofius, 312-3.)

[627] So Cranfield, 575: "The entry of the fullness of the Gentiles will be the event which will mark the end of Israel's hardening."

[628] On the question of whether Paul envisioned the ingathering of the fullness of the Gentiles in terms of the Old Testament motif of the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles to Jerusalem, cf. the various approaches of Munck (*Paul*, 47-49), Plag (41-47), Stuhlmacher (*Interpretation*, 560-66), Zeller (*Juden und Heiden*, 245-58, 282-84), and Aus, 234ff.

[629] Murray, II:93-4, accepts that πλήρωμα must have a numerical reference in verse 25 as it does in verse 12, but argues further that in line with verse 12 "'fulness' intimates a propor-tion such as supplies a contrast with what goes before." This includes "the enhancement and extension of blessing", and must mean a greatly increased influx of Gentiles into God's king-dom. But for Murray, this fulness cannot mean the ingathering of all the Gentile elect before the final conversion of all Israel because he has already interpreted ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν in verse 15 to mean a greater conversion of the Gentile world after the return of Israel to God's fold. There-fore he contends (95) that τὸ πλήρωμα in verse 25 refers to "blessing for the Gentiles that is parallel and similar to the expansion of blessing for Israel denoted by 'their fulness' (vs. 12) and the 'receiving' (vs. 15)." This seems to lead to some incoherence in Paul's thought, but Murray defends his interpretation in the following way (95-6): "The only obstacle to this view of the sequence is the unwarranted assumption that 'the fulness of the Gentiles' is the consummation of blessing for the Gentiles and leaves room for no further expansion of gospel blessing. 'The ful-ness of the Gentiles' denotes unprecedented blessing for them but does not exclude even greater blessing to follow. It is to this subsequent blessing that the restoration of Israel contributes." A number of points, however, argue against this interpretation: 1) Since it is Paul's stated purpose to combat Gentile condescension toward Israel, he would hardly want to make a case for further Gentile responsiveness after Israel's full return; 2) Paul's focus since the beginning of chapter 9 has been on the question of God's faithfulness to Israel, it would lessen the impact of his climac-tic conclusion concerning Israel if he were to state or even intimate that God's saving work with the Gentiles would continue after Israel's ingathering; 3) Paul's perspective is clearly eschatological, and the straightforward link-up of the three events of verses 25-26a both temporally and logically argues most naturally for the view that the return of all Israel forms the final salvation-historical work of God which signals the consummation of earthly history; 4) τὸ πλήρωμα signifies a fixed number of individuals (as Murray himself admits), and by its very nature denotes completeness. Since Paul is dealing very broadly here with the final stages of history, its seems very unlikely that he would use such a powerful term as πλήρωμα to indicate merely a sudden large increase in Gentile converts before Israel's return, which is in turn fol-lowed by a further expansion of the gospel among the Gentile nations. If Paul understood his-tory to unfold in this manner, πλήρωμα would much better have been reserved for this final expansion of the gospel to the world after the inclusion of Israel; 5) lastly, the thematic structure of the summary verses 30-31 demonstrates conclusively that for Paul God's saving purposes cul-minate in His ultimate mercy toward Israel. The mercy shown to the Gentile world not only saves Gentiles but works for Israel's benefit: ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ [νῦν] ἐλεηθῶσιν. Based on what Paul

ring either to the total number of those chosen from among the Gentiles

throughout the ages or to that portion of the total still to come to faith between

Paul's present day and the ingathering of Israel.[630] The term begins to take on a

semi-apocalyptic meaning in Paul[631] and finds thematic parallels in many

quarters of Judaism.[632] According to the rabbis, after the fall of man the precise

number of mankind was decreed until the day of judgment, which could not

take place until that number was reached.[633] Even more telling is the account

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says in 9-11, there is no warrant for believing that he might have envisioned a further mission among the Gentiles after Israel's ingathering.

[630] A few scholars have speculated that by πλήρωμα Paul could mean "the Gentile world as a whole" (so Cranfield, 576; cf. SH, 335). This presupposes a close parallel with Paul's usage of πλήρωμα in verse 12, where the "fullness" of Israel most likely means her return to God *en masse*. Paul then would be saying, "A hardening has come in part upon Israel until the Gentile world as a whole is saved, and then Israel as a whole will be saved. Such a view is possible, although Paul gives us no clear indication here that he envisions a complete turning of the Gentile world to God. But even if such were the case, Paul would no doubt continue to maintain that this pattern conforms to God's electing purpose, and that the full number who come in do so as a result of having been elected by God to salvation. There is no thought of universalism here, as if all mankind, past, present and future, is finally saved by God, but rather only the possibility that Paul envisions that as the end approaches, more and more Gentiles will turn to Christ until the vast majority among the nations (i.e., the Gentile world as a whole) comes to faith, after which "all Israel will be saved."

Nevertheless, it is more likely that πλήρωμα gets its sense of "fullness" not from the largeness of its size (this may or may not be) but rather "from the fact that it contains the entire number fixed by God" (Gundry-Volf, 177 n94; also Ponsot, *Tout Isrdel*, 411). Πλήρωμα τοῦ χρονοῦ in Gal 4.4 provides an apt parallel. In its context there, πλήρωμα must refer not to the completion of time "as a whole" but rather to the reaching of a particular point in time decreed by God.

[631] Cf. Black, 147. Stuhlmann, 169, argues that Paul here borrows from Jewish apocalyptic material the thought of a *numerus iustorum* which must be complete before the promise can be fulfilled: "Die Erfüllung wird konditioniert durch den numerus iustorum. Seine Unvollständigkeit erklärt, daß die Einlösung der Verheißung vorläufig ausbleibt. Die Kompletierung dieses numerus wird so zum Determinationsfaktor für die Erfüllung der Verheißung. Als Prozeß terminiert sie die bis zur Erfüllung sich erstreckende Zeit."

[632] Cf. D. C. Allison, "The Background of Romans 11:11-15 in Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Literature," *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 10 (1980), 229-34; also Aus, 246-61.

[633] Cf. Black, 147; Dahl (*Volk* 227, 245). Syr Bar 23.4-5a reflects the same idea of a fixed numbering of the human race which must be reached before God's judgment and reward is meted out: "For when Adam sinned and death was decreed against those who were to be born, the multitude of those who were to be born was numbered. And for that number a place was prepared where the living ones might live and where the dead might be preserved. No creature will live again unless the number that has been appointed is completed." (Translation by A. F. J. Klijn in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Charlesworth, James H., ed.; 1:629.)

of 4 Ez. 4.35-37, where in reply to Ezra's impatient cry, the Most High points

to a future date when the number of the righteous will be completed:

> Did not the souls of the righteous in their chambers ask about
> these matters, saying, 'How long are we to remain here? And
> when will come the harvest of our reward?' And Jeremiel the
> archangel answered them and said, 'When the number of those
> like yourselves is completed; for he has weighed the age in the
> balance, and measured the times by measure, and numbered the
> times by number; and he will not move or arouse them until that
> measure is fulfilled.' (Translation by B. M. Metzger in *The Old
> Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Charlesworth, James H., ed.;
> 1:531.)

Parallels with the thought of a fixed number of elect may also be found in Rev.

6.11; 7.4; and 14.1. In its present context, πλήρωμα carries connotations of

divine predestination and election of individuals, and may be defined as the

complete(d) number of the elect pre-determined by God from among the

nations.[634]

The words of verse 26a, καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται, have occa-

sioned much debate throughout the centuries of Christian scholarship. Two cen-

tral issues concern us: 1) the sense of καὶ οὕτως -- is it temporal, modal or

logical in connection? and 2) the precise constituency and degree of com-

prehensiveness of πᾶς Ἰσραήλ. We shall look at these in turn.

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[634] So Mayer, *Heilsratschluß*, 283. Schlier, though a bit more daring as to detail,
essentially agrees (339): "Τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν ist die apokalyptische, von Gott vorgesehene
Vollzahl der Heidenvölker, also weder all Heiden auf der Erde, die Christen geworden wären,
noch die gesamte Völkerwelt, die sich bekehrt hätte, sondern die von Gott bestimmte Zahl der
Völker, sofern sie sich erfüllt hat, eine Zahl, die nur Gott kennt." Cf. also Stuhlmacher,
Romans, 166, 172.

One of the weaknesses of Aus' thesis that the "full number of the Gentiles" refers to
Paul's gathering of Gentile Christian representatives and their gifts for presentation at Jerusalem
(260-61) is the fact that he never considers the strongly predestinarian cast implicit in this phrase
both in its immediate context of Romans 11 and in the wider contemporary Jewish literature.

Likewise, Longenecker's thesis (122 n68) that τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν refers to the
totality of the nations being represented in the final salvation (rather than to a certain number of
Gentiles chosen and saved by God) neglects this crucial information (cf. Käsemann, 313).

Most scholars have interpreted καὶ οὕτως in a temporal way, recognizing

the flow of time sequence in Paul's perception of end-time events: Israel will be

hardened until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, *and then* all Israel will be

saved. This is certainly a possible meaning of οὕτως (cf. LSJ s.v., 1.8), but not

the only one, and as Leenhardt pointed out, if Paul had been concerned

primarily with temporal sequence, he would have served his purpose better by

using καὶ τότε.[635] We might more accurately say that although καὶ οὕτως itself

carries no temporal meaning here, it occurs within a framework permeated with

the redolence of time sequencing, and so in a secondary way bears that "scent of

temporality."

Other exegetes have argued for a modal sense to καὶ οὕτως: *in this way*

all Israel will be saved. Verse 26a then either looks back to ἄχρι οὗ τὸ

πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθη of verse 25 (and even further back to 10.19 /

11.14 and the somewhat distant implication that the comprehensive response of

the Gentile world will drive Israel to jealousy and repentance so that in this way

all Israel will be saved),[636] or forward to the Old Testament quotations of verses

26b-27. This latter view takes οὕτως as correlative with the following κάθως

and yields the sense: "and all Israel will be saved in the way I am about to des-

cribe...."[637] This seems unlikely,[638] as it entails reading the Old Testament

quotations not as a scriptural proof (which is Paul's typical purpose for intro-

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[635] Leenhardt, 294.

[636] Luz, for example, argues (294) that Paul's concern in verse 26 is with "...die Art
und Weise der Bekehrung Israels." But Kim, 84, replies rightly that "it is far-fetched to read
out of οὕτως Paul's idea that 'Israel wird auf unerwartete paradoxe Weise gerettet'."

[637] So BAGD, s.v., 2; C. Müller, 43; Plag, 37 n148; Stuhlmacher, 560 (cf. idem,
Romans, 172).

[638] The placement of οὕτως at the beginning of the clause rather than immediately
before or after σωθήσεται also argues against this interpretation (cf. Lk 24.24; Phil 3.17).

ducing Old Testament passages with καθὼς γέγραπται)[639] but rather as descriptions of the mode of Israel's salvation.[640]

But even more damaging to both these modal interpretations is the fact they fail to support the central theme which Paul has been working toward since verse 11, *the fact* that all Israel will one day be saved. To this point, Paul has not directly stated his conviction that God will in the end show mercy to the hardened children of Abraham. Would it not be an abrupt leap of logic for Paul to argue the manner in which all Israel will be saved before he has overtly established its certain eventuality?[641] Verse 26a provides the climax to the argument he began in 9.6b concerning the faithfulness of God toward Israel. The apostle's principal interest lies not in the manner by which Israel will be saved, but in the more fundamental issue of whether God has ultimately abandoned her or not. The modal interpretation of καὶ οὕτως fails to do justice to Paul's argument by drawing attention away from the fact of Israel's future return to the mode by which it will happen.[642] This in turn fails to support Paul's stated purpose of deflating Gentile Christian pride -- for their contention was not over the *manner* in which Israel would be saved, but more fundamentally *whether* Israel would be saved at all.

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[639] Of the 18 times Paul employs the phrase καθὼς / καθάπερ γέγραπται, never does he use it in correlation with οὕτως.

[640] Mussner, 30, notes that if Paul had intended a modal sense, "...he would have placed the 'thus' in verse 26a in another position in the sentence and would have begun it without the particle 'and' (*kai*)."

[641] So Kim, 83-4, argues that Paul would first be expected to draw "...the positive consequence from the preceding statement, 'partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles come', before jumping to describe the way in which all Israel will be saved." Gundry-Volf, 179, following Kim, adds: "Paul has not previously stated with great clarity and force *that* Israel will be saved. Thus the reader is not yet prepared for a statement of *how*."

[642] Gundry-Volf, 179-80: "The modal view robs πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται of its climactic character and shifts attention to the particular mode of salvation supposedly introduced by καὶ οὕτως."

Hence we turn to a third understanding of καὶ οὕτως -- as an inferential or logical connector: 'and thus', 'and therefore'. On this reading, οὕτως looks back to ἄχρι οὗ..., and draws out the logical conclusion that since Israel is hardened only until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, once this condition is fulfilled, then (by inference) Israel's hardening will be removed and all Israel thereby saved. Considering Paul's dual purpose of deterring Gentile arrogance as well as demonstrating God's ultimate faithfulness to His covenant promises, this interpretation accords best with the flow of his argument.[643] Further, it allows the subsequent Old Testament quotations to function in their natural role as scriptural proof for what Paul has just deduced concerning Israel.

Next we must consider the meaning of πᾶς Ἰσραήλ in verse 26a. Four different understandings have held sway at different times in the history of interpretation, and may be broadly classified as belonging to a figurative or strict/literal approach.

The figurative approach maintains a distinction between the true people of God as the elect and the rest who are hardened and remain cast off. The first interpretation under this category holds that πᾶς Ἰσραήλ comprises the total number of the elect from both the Gentile nations and Israel.[644] This view must be rejected for four reasons: first, never once in his argument to this point has Paul included Gentiles together with Jews in his usage of Ἰσραήλ;[645] second,

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[643] Gundry-Volf, 181, concludes: "Paul's interest here lies in developing a logical argument, not an eschatological timetable." Cf. also Hofius, "Evangelium," 315; Kim, 83-5; H. W. Schmidt, 199; Hvalvik, 96-7.

[644] This was argued by Calvin, 255-6, and more recently by Jeremias, "Beobachtungen," 199-200. Lyons, 205-6, gives qualified support: "It is by no means certain that Paul does not mean by 'Israel,' here, all the elect 'sons of Abraham,' Jews or Gentiles (see e.g., Rom 2.25-29; 4.9-15; 9.6-13; Gal 3.6-29; 4.21-31; 6.17; Phil 3.2-11)." Most recently, cf. N. T. Wright, *Climax*, 250-51.

[645] On this point see B. Longenecker, 96-7.

and more important, from 11.11-25 Paul has maintained a contrast between Israel and the Gentiles as distinct people groups for whom God has particular plans; third, the distinction between ethnic Israel and Gentile believers continues immediately from verse 26b and carries on through verse 31; fourth, the term Ἰσραήλ is used unequivocally in verse 25 to mean ethnic Israel; it is hardly conceivable that Paul would use it one verse later in a radically new sense without adding some essential modifiers to make this change clear to his readers.[646]

The second figurative interpretation limits Ἰσραήλ to ethnic Israel, but views it in a way similar to 9.6b:[647] all Israel means all the elect of ethnic Israel throughout its history.[648] This perspective also appears unlikely as is demonstrated by the fourth reason given above[649] as well as by the fact that such a meaning would be so patently obvious and mundane as to be anticlimactic. In verses 12, 15, and 16 as well as in the olive tree metaphor, Paul has primed his readers for some extraordinary conclusion involving the future, hardened mass of Israel. It would be a tremendous let-down for him at this point of literary and logical climax to offer the fairly pedestrian truth that all the elect remnants

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[646] *Pace* Wright (*Climax*, 250), who appeals to 9.6 as a demonstration that Paul can use 'Israel' in different senses within close proximity. However, in 9.6, the semantic structure of the sentence forces one to conclude what one would otherwise not conclude: that there are two Israels. Further, even with this distinction in 9.6, both Israels are comprised only of ethnic Jews; there is no hint anywhere that Paul intends to include Gentiles Christians within the term 'Israel'.

[647] But whereas in 9.6b, Paul speaks only in terms of present day Israel, making a distinction between those who are saved and those rejected, this view widens the scope to include all Israelites past, present and future, who have been or will be members of the remnant people.

[648] So apparently Bengel, 154-5. Ponsot speaks of 'spiritual Israel'.

[649] Murray, II:96, asserts: "It is exegetically impossible to give to 'Israel' in this verse any other denotation than that which belongs to the term throughout this chapter." We would modify this to focus instead on the meaning of the term in verse 25, since as we have seen above, the concept of 'Israel' is used with various degrees of refinement by Paul in his argument in Romans 11.

of Israel throughout the generations will be saved. Moreover, such a view of Israel in verse 26 would have Paul answering a question in which he has shown little previous interest and which would be of little help in combating Gentile pride over having replaced the mass of unbelieving Israel: "What will be the ultimate fate of the elect Jewish remnant?" Paul's answer to this question might easily have met Gentile Christian indifference -- it certainly would not have pricked the bubble of their conceit.

Most modern scholars have therefore embraced a strict interpretation of 'Israel' in verse 26a, with a view to maintaining the correspondence of the term between verses 25 and 26.[650] 'Israel' thus means the ethnic Jewish nation which is presently hardened, and continues in that state until the $\pi\lambda\dot{\eta}\rho\omega\mu\alpha$ of the Gentiles has been saved. Such an interpretation corresponds well with Paul's stated purpose of undermining Gentile Christian arrogance over against Israel and should be accepted. Within this camp, however, opinion is divided into two groups over how to understand $\pi\hat{\alpha}\varsigma$: does 'all Israel' mean ethnic Israel comprised of every individual Jew alive at the eschatological consummation, or ethnic Israel as a whole, without regard to every particular Israelite?[651]

The former interpretation was maintained principally by a group of pre-1950s scholars,[652] and has little overt evidence to commend it. Appeal is made to the fact that since $\pi\hat{\alpha}\varsigma$ modifies an anarthrous noun it should be translated

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[650] Michel, 248, points out as well the link back to Paul's introductory thoughts on ethnic Israel in chapter 9: "Entsprechend der Anfangsthese Röm 9,6: 'nicht alle, die von Israel abstammen, sind Israel,' folgt V26 die Schlußthese: 'ganz Israel wird gerettet werden.'"

However, Stuhlmann (179) observes that "Israel" is the honorific title of the *eschatological* people of God which does not automatically apply to all those who belong to the Jewish nation. Hence, "all Israel" in an eschatological sense does not necessarily include the whole of ethnic Israel. Cf. Refoulé ("Cohérence," 77-78) for a defense of this position.

[651] Mussner, 31-32, holds "all Israel" to refer to the nation of Israel "in its diachronic expansion through history and not merely to a part of it."

[652] Cf. Meyer, 233-5; Kühl, 392-3; also Schmidt, 37-41.

"the entire Israel" (signifying a total without exceptions) rather than "Israel as a whole" (signifying fullness with allowance made for exceptions). Verses 12 and 28-32 are mustered in support to argue that Paul envisions the πλήρωμα of Israel returning to God, and argues for this return on the basis of the fact that these hardened Israelites are also elect and thus beloved of God διὰ τοὺς πατέρας. Finally, Paul concludes his entire argument with the broad-brush declaration that God has consigned all to disobedience that he may have mercy upon all (verse 32).

We will deal more fully with the latter two points in the following sub-section on verses 28-32, but a few words are in order here. First, concerning the grammatical difference between πᾶς + articular noun vs. πᾶς + anarthrous noun it should be noted that this distinction is not as clear-cut as once was thought.[653] In addition, certain types of anarthrous nouns (such as proper names) may function as articular nouns with reference to πᾶς and so be capable of articular translation. Most importantly, there are obvious cases in the LXX and extra-biblical Judaism where 'all Israel' does not demand or imply entirety, and some passages where such a notion is necessarily excluded.[654] Such parallels make clear that πᾶς 'Ισραήλ may indicate less than numerical entirety.

Secondly, as we have noted with regard to Paul's use of πλήρωμα in verses 12 and 24, 'fullness' does not necessarily connote entirety; it may just as well mean 'completeness.' If we are correct that in verse 24 ὁ πλήρωμα τῶν

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[653] Cf. Moule, *Idiom Book*, 93-95 for a detailed discussion of this issue.

[654] Cf. 1 Sam 7.5; 11.15; 13.20; 2 Sam 15.6; 18.17; Deut 31.11; Jud 8.27 where a subset within Israel, standing as a representative group for the nation, is called πᾶς 'Ισραήλ. In passages such as 1 Sam 18.16; 2 Sam 2.9; 3.21; and 2 Chr 12.1, πᾶς 'Ισραήλ denotes a portion of the twelve tribes. And in *m. Sanh.* 10.1 (Danby, 397), as many have recently pointed out, the bare assertion, "All Israelites [Hebrew: כל ישראל] have a share in the world to come," is followed by a list of individuals and groups within ethnic Israel that "have no share in the world to come."

ἐθνῶν means the completed number from the Gentile nations of those

predetermined by God according to election, and if we should see a cor-

respondence between ὁ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν in verse 25 and πᾶς Ἰσραήλ in

verse 26,[655] then it becomes even more likely that for Paul 'all Israel' does not

include all Israelites alive at the end of history, but rather the full number of

those chosen by God, which, as the flow of his thought makes clear, will be a

large majority but not all of hardened Israel.[656]

Thirdly, Paul's broad-brush declaration in verse 32 is precisely that: a

lyrical generalization concerning God's overall salvific intentions towards

humanity. As the vast majority of commentators have noted, it would be

patently unfair to appeal to this verse in support of a doctrine of universal salva-

tion in light of Paul's clear indications throughout his letters of judgment com-

ing upon those who continue to live apart from Christ. Further, if one were to

argue for the salvation of the entire nation of Israel from verse 32, one would

be compelled to argue for the salvation of the entirety of the Gentile world as

well. But it is clear from verse 25 that this is not Paul's perspective. For the

apostle to propound such a view would be to negate or at least severely hamper

the force of his warning to the Gentile believers at Rome concerning their

spiritual arrogance and the danger of losing their favor before God.

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[655] For a cogent argument in favor of this, cf. Stuhlmann, 178-181.

[656] So Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 166. However, some scholars have argued that Paul intends a contrast between the 'fullness of the Gentiles' and 'all Israel,' to highlight God's faithfulness to Israel as the elect people of God. So E. P. Sanders (*Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, 196); Walter (181); Hvalvik (100-101). This view has much to commend it, but should not be taken to mean that Paul thinks of Israel's election only in corporate terms; rather, the election of all Israel to salvation at the eschaton depends on the sovereign work of God in the lives of each chosen individual, as Paul has already stressed in Romans 9.

Much more likely, then, is the view that πᾶς 'Ισραήλ means Israel as a whole, though not every single individual Jew alive at the realization of the 'fullness of the Gentiles.'[657] But even here there remains a further question: did Paul envision this 'Israel as a whole' merely collectively (i.e., a merging of the heretofore distinct groupings of τὸ λεῖμμα and οἱ λοιποί to denote a non-numerical completeness) or as a complete group composed of all the individuals destined to be included (numerical completeness)? Gundry-Volf[658] argues that the context suggests an understanding of this completeness in terms of groups and their destinies rather than of individuals comprising those groups.[659] But perhaps this is a false dichotomy, for as we saw in 9.6-29 Paul has already laid the foundation of God's sovereign electing activity in the salvation of human beings, and in 11.25 the apocalyptic usage of πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν underlines the sovereignty of God in bringing to Himself the full number of those predetermined according to election -- this in turn presupposes an election of individuals to salvation.[660] There is certainly no doubt that in 11.25ff. Paul wants to show that God's final purpose for Israel involves the gathering of the hardened group together with the remnant in order to prove God's promise to Israel has not failed, but this does not force Paul to give up his understanding of how God has worked from the time of the patriarchs onwards both to call and save His people. This final episode of the divine salvation of 'all Israel'

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[657] Cf. Holtz, 292-93. Guerra, 236, argues that "...Paul expects the majority of Jews who presently reject the gospel to come to believe in Christ." It seems to us, however, that Paul's vision has shifted to the eschatological future, and he is contemplating those unbelieving Jews (perhaps including some of his contemporaries, perhaps not) alive at the parousia. Thus, "all Israel" is to be seen synchronically, not diachronically (pace Fitzmyer, Romans, 623).

[658] Following Mayer, Heilsratschluß, 288.

[659] Gundry-Volf, 184. Cf. also Longenecker, 97.

[660] Cf. Zeller, Römer, 198.

involves the mass of hardened Israel, i.e., the vast majority of those Israelites

alive at the time of the consummation, who come to salvation in Christ[661] in the

same way as all human beings up to that point in time -- through the electing

activity of God (cf. 9.11).[662]

4.1.1.1. Excursus: Paul and Imminent Apocalyptic Expectations

At this point we must take up the issue of Paul's apocalyptic stance. It

is fair to say that many Pauline scholars today favor the view that Paul held to

an imminent eschatology, i.e., an urgent hope that the Parousia would occur

within his lifetime. If such indeed is the case, this would carry dire con-

sequences for the heart of our thesis: for if Paul expected the final consumma-

tion of Romans 11.25-26 within his lifetime, then he would also expect the vast

majority of contemporary, ethnic Israel to be saved. But, we have argued to the

contrary that according to 9.1-23 Paul believed that the majority of his kinsmen

by race were anathema to God and predestined to destruction.

Assuming for the moment an imminent eschatology for Paul, our thesis

would remain valid only under the following scenarios: 1) that Paul was

unaware of the conflict between his eschatology and his view concerning con-

temporary Israel, or at least had not fully thought through the implications of

both assertions; or 2) that Paul was fully aware of the inconsistency and confu-

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[661] Paul could not envision any Jew (or Gentile, for that matter) being saved by God apart from the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. This is underscored by his messianic understanding of the ῥυόμενος of Is 59.20 as quoted in 11.26 -- cf. W. Kasch, *TDNT* 6:998-1003; Johnson, 128. For an excellent discussion of the issue of a 'Sonderweg' for Israel (referring to F. Mussner's original proposal in *Traktat über die Juden* [München: Kosel, 1979], 60), cf. R. Hvalvik, "A 'Sonderweg' for Israel," *JSNT* 38 (1990), 87-107.

[662] Thus Refoulé ("Cohérence," 79) can conclude: "Dans ce contexte on peut légitime-ment penser que 'Tout Israël' représente la plénitude, ou nombre fixé par Dieu, des *élus* -- même si la formule 'Tout Israël', en 11,26, s'oppose au 'Reste' de 11,5-7, elle ne préjuge pas du nombre des élus. L'emploi de 'Tout Israël' en 11,26 ne contredit donc nullement Rm 9,6ss."

sion of thought, but nevertheless seeks to maintain both perspectives, mirroring his own ambivalence. Yet it is hardly likely that in such an intricately woven argument as Romans 9-11 the apostle could be so ignorant of the implications of his eschatology as to miss this critical inconsistency. Even if he had, no doubt the oversight would have been pointed out to him by his opponents at the earliest opportunity. Nor is it very likely that after demonstrating a pattern of rigorous argumentation throughout Romans Paul would now at the climax of his discussion concerning Israel feel content to embrace a logical inconsistency of major consequence. We must conclude that if a strongly imminent eschatology characterized Paul's outlook as he wrote the letter to the Romans, then our thesis fails to do justice to Paul's understanding and use of election in chapters 9-11.

But it is not at all clear that Paul did maintain such an eschatological position when he penned this epistle. Certainly the apostle's general orientation paralleled Jewish apocalyptic in the sense that throughout his writings his eschatology reflects the motifs of vindication, universalism and dualism.[663] But the motif of imminence is not so clearly represented through the full range of his writings. One may readily admit an imminent eschatology in Paul's early letters (cf. in particular 1 Thess 4-5), but acknowledge as well the possibility that over a period of 10-20 years this urgent hope would moderate into a more relaxed and reserved perspective,[664] allowing Paul still to maintain an apocalyptic outlook (minus the urgency related to an imminent return of Christ) while

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[663] Cf. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel*, 30-53, for an extended treatment of this theme.

[664] It does not demand much personal reflection to understand how over a period of two decades the expectations of one's own hopes can moderate from a longing ache for immediate fulfillment to a more settled and patient certainty of fulfillment at some undisclosed point in the future.

dealing more and more with long-range issues facing the now well-established churches. This, we believe, is precisely what has happened by the time Paul writes to Rome somewhere in 55-57 A.D.

If the eschaton were indeed imminent in the mind of the apostle as he composed Romans, one might expect to find numerous statements within this "most theological of all Paul's epistles" relating to the *closeness* of Christ's return, particularly when he deals with eschatological matters. Yet such is not the case.

In 2.1-16, Paul highlights how all human behavior, both Jewish and Gentile, will be judged according to the standards of God. In verses 5ff. as well as verse 16, the apostle directly mentions the coming day of judgment, yet here, where such thoughts would find natural expression (should Paul have had them), we discover no hints of imminence. Likewise, in 4.25 as Paul concludes a section on faith in Christ, he presents Jesus as "our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification." For one holding an imminent eschatology, this would have provided a perfect opportunity to add "...and who will come again soon for our glorification," or some such thought. But again, we find no hint of the nearness of Christ's return. In 5.5, Paul speaks of "hope which does not disappoint us," the reason being that the Spirit has been given to us, not that this hope is linked to the imminent return of Christ which will bring about the fulfillment of our desire to share the glory of God (5.3). In 6.5, Paul proclaims his certainty that those who are united with Christ in death will also being united with Christ in resurrection, yet again there is no hint of imminence regarding this reality.

Romans 8.17-39 provides strong evidence that Paul no longer believes that Christ will return shortly. Here he meditates upon the sufferings of creation and more specifically those of the disciple of Christ, and compares them to the glory yet to be revealed. The hope of final redemption is linked with eager

longing (verse 19). Yet this is tempered by Paul's call for patience (verse 25), and an assurance that the suffering will be bearable because the Spirit of God intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (verses 26-27) and because God in His sovereign, predestining love orchestrates all events for the welfare of those who love Him (verses 28-30). What remains extraordinary is the fact that nowhere in this passage does Paul share the conviction that Christ will soon return! Instead we are left with the impression that while Paul rejoices in the assurance that the end is coming, nevertheless he does not expect it soon, and so looks for ways to encourage his readers to "settle in for the long haul," enduring suffering for the sake of Christ and relying upon the ministry of the Spirit and the sovereign love of God to sustain them.

The closest we come to an imminent eschatology in Romans is the exhortation of 13.11-12. In urging the Roman Christians to Christ-like behavior, Paul reminds them that νῦν γὰρ ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν. ἡ νὺξ προέκοψεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν. While the first sentence may be treated as a generic exhortation which anyone believing in a final consummation of history could embrace, the second sentence is perhaps more forceful and capable of implying the imminence of the Parousia. However, there is good reason to dispute this. First of all, this passage occurs in close proximity to Paul's teaching concerning the Christian's rightful subjection to government, including proper payment of taxes. If the Parousia were so imminent in Paul's thinking, teaching on the relationship of Christians to government would be rather irrelevant and pointless. Secondly, since for Paul the death and resurrection of Christ signaled the onset of the new age and the death knell of the old, to say "the night is far gone, the day draws near" could simply mean that the decisive eschatological event had already occurred in the empty tomb and thus the power of the risen Christ was available to cast off the darkness and live in the light (13.12b-14). Thus, no matter how long the inter-

val between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and His second coming, the power of the darkness had been broken -- the final light has dawned proleptically in the first Easter.[665] The time language in this passage, then, would serve not so much point to the imminence of Christ's return as to encourage Paul's readers to live in the power of Christ's resurrection which signaled the penetration of the night with the first rays of eternal light.

Lastly, we turn to Romans 16.20, a sentence of disputed meaning. The phrase ἐν τάχει certainly grants an air of imminence to Paul's promise. But the question is open as to whether Paul here is thinking of some historical deliverance pertinent to the church at Rome or of the final, eschatological consummation. We are inclined to embrace the former for two reasons: 1) in the preceding context, Paul has made reference to dissensions and difficulties in the church caused by those not serving the Lord. The promise of verse 20 would naturally serve as an encouragement to the church that God had not forsaken them in the midst of their wranglings, and indeed would resolve their present discord; 2) if Paul meant this promise to have ultimate, history-ending significance, it is odd that he would phrase it in terms limited to his Roman readers, i.e., ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας ὑμῶν. Thus, though one cannot be dogmatic on this point, it seems to us preferable to understand the promise of 16.20 as a reference to God's imminent intervention to resolve some issue in the Christian community at Rome rather than as a somewhat veiled reference to the imminent consummation of all things.

We conclude, therefore, that in Romans there is no clear evidence that Paul expects the imminent return of Christ; indeed, even more, that Paul's concerns indicate that though he expects the Parousia at some indefinite point in the

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[665] On this point cf. Cranfield, 683.

future (not within the next few decades), it is not a matter of such urgency or

priority as to cause him to speak of it in terms of imminence. Rather, the

apostle seems concerned to help the church at Rome learn how to live effec-

tively in the interim time, however long it may extend. Hence Paul could

reasonably maintain in Romans 9.1-5 that the majority of unbelieving Jews of

his generation were doomed to eternal destruction and still be convinced that all

Israel would be saved at the consummation of history.

4.1.2. The ἐκλογή of Israel in 11.28:

After the short catena of quotations from Isaiah and Jeremiah to support

his climactic denouement concerning the salvation of all Israel, Paul

immediately and abruptly[666] puts forth a very purposeful and well-crafted sum-

mary statement in verses 28-32.[667] The fact that this section of material is so

finely balanced stylistically should make us wary of drawing hasty and detailed

conclusions as to what Paul is saying. What Dunn observes concerning verse

28 applies indeed to verses 29-32 as well: "...precision of form takes

precedence over precision of meaning...."[668] With this caution in mind, we

may proceed to examine Paul's thought concerning Israel's relation to God.

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[666] The asyndeton of verse 28 is rather striking. Dunn (684) is probably correct in observing that since what follows has a deliberate and strong rhetorical structure and is clearly of a summarizing nature, the need for a linking phrase or particle to verses 26-27 has receded.

[667] Cf. Rese ("Rettung," 427) for a concise statement of the relation of these summary verses not only to Rom 11 but to the whole of chapters 9-11.

[668] Dunn, 684. Concerning the structure of verses 30-32 in particular, he notes (687): "This is the most contrived or carefully constructed formulation which Paul ever produced in such a tight epigrammatic form, with so many balancing elements (ὥσπερ/οὕτως, ὑμεῖς/οὗτοι, ποτέ/νῦν, ἀπειθέω/ἐλεέω [twice] and τῇ τούτων ἀπειθείᾳ/τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλεεῖ) set within a basic chiastic structure. In such a tightly drawn and inevitably somewhat artificial formulation rhythm of clause and balance of phrase is as important as meaning and a degree of ambiguity can be tolerated....Had precision of meaning been important for Paul he would no doubt have readily sacrificed structure for the sake of meaning. But at the climax of a carefully outlined argument there is little fear of a reader being much misled, so that priority can be placed on rhetorical effect."

In verse 28, Paul presents us with a well-balanced and sharply defined,

paradoxical antithesis:

$$\kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha} \quad \mu\grave{\epsilon}\nu \quad \tau\grave{o} \ \epsilon\grave{\upsilon}\alpha\gamma\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\iota o\nu \quad \grave{\epsilon}\chi\theta\rho o\grave{\iota} \quad \delta\iota' \ \grave{\upsilon}\mu\hat{\alpha}\varsigma$$
$$\kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha} \quad \delta\grave{\epsilon} \quad \tau\grave{\eta}\nu \ \grave{\epsilon}\kappa\lambda o\gamma\grave{\eta}\nu \quad \grave{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\eta\tau o\grave{\iota} \ \delta\iota\grave{\alpha} \ \tau o\grave{\upsilon}\varsigma \ \pi\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha\varsigma.$$

The paradox[669] arises as Israel is viewed from two distinct vantage points in sal-

vation history, the first being her presently negative relationship to the gospel

which thus determines her ἐχθρός status before God, the second that of her con-

tinuing, positive status before God as ἀγαπητός on account of the patriarchs.[670]

τὸ εὐαγγέλιον here certainly does not refer to the content of the gospel, as if

the rejection of Israel forms part of the essence of the Christian proclamation;[671]

rather, it signifies the *spread* of the gospel. Unbelieving Israel stands as an

enemy in God's sight[672] in that she has rejected her Messiah and sought to

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[669] The μέν...δέ structure highlights the present tension in Israel's position before God. Cf. Barrett, 224.

[670] In the repetition of διά-phrases we see an excellent example of form over meaning, for Paul obviously does not intend that διά should understood the same way in both occurrences. In a general way, the preposition may be translated in both places as "for the sake of" (cf. Cranfield, 580), but more specifically, δι' ὑμᾶς carries the sense of ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ("for your benefit") while διὰ τοὺς πατέρας more properly indicates the basis for what precedes. Or in Cranfield's terminology (580), δι' ὑμᾶς has a forward looking sense ("with a view to the advantage of") whereas διὰ τοὺς πατέρας has a backward looking sense ("by reason of").

Paul's declaration that Israel is beloved on account of the fathers has nothing to do with the later rabbinic doctrine of merits (*contra* SH, 330-2). Such a view would be entirely antithetical to everything Paul stood for. For a non-meritorious understanding of God's election love for Israel with reference to the patriarchs, cf. 49-54 above.

[671] In 11.20-24 Paul has made clear that those who are rejected face God's present wrath because of their unbelief. A turn in faith to embrace the gospel would lead to reacceptance by God. Further, the fact of a Jewish Christian remnant testifies to the fact that the gospel message applies to Jews as well as Gentiles. Finally, it is inconceivable that Paul, who believed the gospel to be the fulfillment of divine plans and purposes in the Old Testament, could hold that this gospel and the salvation of Israel were mutually incompatible.

[672] In light of the overwhelming parallelism of this passage, ἐχθροί must be understood as passive, in correspondence to ἀγαπητοί. As Israel is beloved by God with reference to God's electing purposes made known in His promises to the patriarchs, so also Israel is treated as an enemy *by* God for the launching of the gospel to the Gentiles.

Though ἐχθροί and ἀγαπητοί are normally emotionally-laden terms, the context here makes clear that Paul's emphasis is on the divine purpose in treating Israel from these vantage points rather than on the emotions normally associated with enemies and loved ones, respectively. So SH, 337; Leenhardt, 295; Gundry-Volf, 189.

oppose the promulgation of the gospel to the wider world. But at the same time, God enfolds Israel within His merciful plans according to His electing purpose made known originally to the patriarchs.[673] Yet we must now ask more precisely whom it is Paul envisions as beloved by reason of the patriarchs, and how divine election plays a role in this affair.

The immediately preceding context makes it clear that unbelieving Israel is in view, but is it presently unbelieving Israel or future unbelieving Israel? Most scholars assume with little or no argumentation that Paul speaks here of the presently rejected mass of unbelieving Israel. But to us it seems more likely that Paul continues to look into the future, and considers those who make up the ethnic nation when it moves *en masse* from its stance of rebellion to that of repentance and faith. This may be demonstrated by the summarizing nature of verse 28. A number of scholars have noted that 28a gathers up the argument of 11-25,[674] emphasizing the present status of Israel in relation to the gospel and the evangelization of the Gentiles. 28b in turn summarizes verses 26-27, which, as we have argued above, focus on the salvation of the mass of ethnic Israel alive at the time of fulfillment. Thus, Paul again apparently employs his complex understanding of Israel as both a continuous and discontinuous people.[675] The election of Israel established first with the patriarchs continues to stand. This is both a theocratic and soteriological election[676] -- Paul boldly

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[673] Cf. Schlatter, 328; C. Müller, 107.

[674] Cf. SH, 337; Murray, II:100; Fitzmyer, 861; Dunn, 685.

[675] Cf. above, 213-16, 221.

[676] *Pace* SH, 337; Murray, II:101; Cranfield, 580; Dunn, 685; Gundry-Volf, 189-90, who hold that ἐκλογή in verse 28 refers broadly to God's election of the nation as a whole, and thus corresponds to the "people whom He foreknew" of 11.2.

Meyer, 239-40, on the other hand connects ἐκλογή here in a fascinating way with its use in verses 5 and 7, arguing that as it was earlier defined in terms of the elect λεῖμμα, so it should be understood here: thus, the unbelieving Israelites are beloved "...in conformity with the fact...that among them is that elect remnant." However, the concept of the remnant has not figured strongly in Paul's argument since 11.7. It would indeed be odd for the apostle to

affirms that God's purpose for future Israel entails the salvation of "all Israel,"

whom He has elected and called to salvation in line with the promises made to

the patriarchs. Thus, in Paul's view, future Israel will be composed essentially

of "children of promise"[677] (cf. 9.7-8) whom God has chosen in advance κατὰ

τὴν ἐκλογήν (= ἵνα ἡ κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένῃ [9.11c]). That this

is still an election which distinguishes between children of promise and children

of the flesh (cf. 9.8) may be seen from two facts: 1) as noted above, the 'all

Israel' of verse 26a most likely leaves room for exceptions who are not saved;

and 2) even the mass of Israel brought in at the end is to be distinguished from

those Jews between the inauguration of the gospel age and the final consumma-

tion of all things who died in their unbelief.[678]

Dunn correctly notes that κατὰ τὴν ἐκλογήν "refers not simply to the

fact of Israel's election, but to the character of God's choice of Israel as a free

and gracious choice...."[679] This choice in turn is grounded (διὰ τοὺς πατέρας)

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reintroduce the idea now in a section where he is summarizing the thought of verses 11-27. It is
much more likely that in verse 28 Paul employs ἐκλογή in its usual abstract sense as a principle,
especially in connection with κατά. We see precisely this usage in 9.11 (ἡ κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν
πρόθεσις).

[677] Note the close conceptual link between τέκνα (cf. 9.7-8) and ἀγαπητοί. Those
descendants of Abraham brought to salvation in the end are beloved of God because in His
sovereign freedom God has chosen to make them children of promise, recipients of the faithful-
ness of the divine love which first chose their forefathers according to that same sovereign free-
dom.

[678] Thus we cannot accept Cranfield's perspective (580), echoed by many others: "By
'election' here is meant the election of the people as a whole (cf. v.2), not that election which
distinguishes within Israel (cf. vv.5 and 7) and which is itself a pointer to the election of the
people as a whole." Paul's argument is that this distinguishing election of God continues to sift
and choose up to the very end, at which point God in his sovereign and faithful purposes brings
in 'all Israel'. The distinction still continues between those whom God has chosen for Himself
over the course of salvation history, and those whom God has rejected.

[679] Dunn, 685.

in the free and gracious promises God made to the patriarchs in choosing them
and their descendants. Since Paul has now boldly and irrevocably linked the
soteriological election of future Israel to God's gracious disposition toward the
patriarchs, he must justify this claim.

Verse 29, introduced with γάρ, serves to substantiate his assertion.
Here Paul argues that the gifts and call of God[680] are ἀμεταμέλητα. This
juridical term, meaning "irrevocable/without repentance" and standing as it does
at the beginning of the clause, specially emphasizes the faithfulness of God to
His gracious purposes toward Israel seen in the progression of blessing bes-
towed upon her. With this term, Paul highlights the contrast between the
transitory nature of Israel's present hardness of heart and the permanence or
finality of her beloved status before God. The apostle affirms that the ultimate
election of Israel is assured because God in His sovereign freedom has called
future Israel to be children of promise and so to respond in faith to His mercy.

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[680] Τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ ἡ κλῆσις τοῦ θεοῦ has engendered some dispute among scholars
as to the precise relation between the two nominatives. Three views predominate: 1) καί
functions with its normal copulative force and so 'gifts' and 'calling' should be seen as distinct
categories (so Cranfield, 581). 2) This phrase is an example of hendiadys, and should be trans-
lated, "the benefits of calling" (so Calvin, 257; Käsemann, 316). 3) καί has an explicative func-
tion here, highlighting κλῆσις as the predominant example among divine χαρίσματα which,
being irrevocable, establishes Paul's claim that future Israel is beloved of God and guaranteed
salvation (so Meyer, 240; Michel, 252; Gundry-Volf, 190-1). Meyer puts it particularly
clearly: "Unrepented, and so subject to no recall, are the displays of grace and (especially) the
calling of God."
    Though Dunn (686) is probably correct to say there is no need to choose among these
options, nevertheless it seems to us that the third view follows Paul's thought most closely in
this passage.
    Cranfield (581 n3) errs by defining 'calling' over against 'gifts' as meaning "...the
other aspects of special commission, function, task, service, that he [Paul] here has specially in
mind." The apostle's attention in 11.26-32 is clearly on calling in terms of election to bless-
ing/salvation rather than election to service. Certainly it is true that Paul understood Israel's
election generally as including the nation's call to a particular task or role within history, but in
this context Paul's purpose is to substantiate his claim that the Israel of verse 26a is beloved of
God, elect by reason of the patriarchs, and so assured of salvation in the end. Hence, all the
concrete examples of the grace of God (cf. 9.4-5), but especially God's calling, are irrevocable,
incapable of reversal.
    This understanding of κλῆσις fits well with Paul's use of καλεῖν in Romans 9, where it
has the sense "to designate," "to effectually call." Cf. our discussion of this above, 149.

4.1.3. Paul's final conclusion in verses 30-32:

Most modern scholars readily recognize the carefully crafted nature of Paul's concluding words, artistically woven together for literary and rhetorical effect.[681] Such a fact should make us careful not to draw unwarranted conclusions based solely on statements constructed to fit stylistic structures. Instead, what Paul says here must be understood in broad terms, as a general summary of the main thrusts of his total argument in 9-11. Therefore, we may take as a rule that if any statements in verses 30-32, considered by themselves, lean toward conclusions not warranted by Paul's preceding, detailed argument, greater weight should be granted to the substance of his discourse rather than to the flash of his style and rhetoric.

With that in mind, we now turn to consider the final two issues which bear on our understanding of Paul's concept of election in Romans 11: a) the second $\nu\hat{\nu}\nu$ of verse 31; and b) the meaning of $\tau o\grave{\nu}\varsigma$ $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha\varsigma$ in verse 32.

a) Within verses 30-31 one finds a striking example of chiastic parallelism within the larger A B A¹ B¹ parallelism of the two verses:

$$\nu\hat{\nu}\nu \; \delta\grave{\varepsilon} \; \dot{\eta}\lambda\varepsilon\acute{\eta}\theta\eta\tau\varepsilon \qquad \tau\hat{\eta} \; \tau o\acute{\nu}\tau\omega\nu \; \dot{\alpha}\pi\varepsilon\iota\theta\varepsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$$

$$\tau\hat{\omega} \; \dot{\nu}\mu\varepsilon\tau\acute{\varepsilon}\rho\omega \; \dot{\varepsilon}\lambda\acute{\varepsilon}\varepsilon\iota \qquad \dot{\iota}\nu\alpha \; \kappa\alpha\grave{\iota} \; \alpha\dot{\nu}\tau o\grave{\iota} \; \nu\hat{\nu}\nu \; \dot{\varepsilon}\lambda\varepsilon\eta\theta\hat{\omega}\sigma\iota\nu.$$

Paul's main point in these verses is to elucidate rather than undergird what he has declared in verses 28-29. To this end, he charts the parallels in God's dealings with believing Gentiles and unbelieving Jews alike, reaffirms that their respective destinies are inextricably bound together, and thus demonstrates that in light of God's overarching mercy, future Israel's ingathering is just as plausible as that which the Gentiles are presently enjoying.[682]

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[681] Cf. n668 above.

[682] Cf. Siegert, 174-5 for a good discussion of the structural logic of this passage. Also, Gundry-Volf, 192.

The general meaning of Paul's argument is clear. The occurrences of

νῦν in verse 30b and again in 31a are clearly temporal, relating back to ποτέ in

verse 30a. However, in verse 31b, we find a third νῦν which is hard to recon-

cile with the flow of Paul's argument up to this point.[683] In verse 26a, Paul

clearly argues that Israel's salvation will come to pass in the eschatological

future. From 11.14 it is manifestly evident that Paul did not expect his mission

to be highly successful among his contemporary kinsmen. Yet this νῦν of verse

31b, if given strict temporal significance, would require us to think that Paul

envisions the salvation of Israel as commencing immediately or imminently.[684]

Most commentators, however, agree that this passage cannot be taken as evi-

dence that Paul believed the end was imminent. While νῦν retains some

temporal significance, it cannot be narrowed down to the immediate present.[685]

This leaves two possibilities: either νῦν denotes an eschatological pre-

sent,[686] or it is included by Paul for stylistic balance in this elegantly polished,

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[683] It is not altogether clear that this νῦν belongs to the original text. Metzger notes
that "a preponderance of early and diverse witnesses favors the shorter reading" (B. M.
Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 527), including p^{46}. However,
on the text-critical principle that greater weight should generally be given to the lectio difficilior,
νῦν perhaps should be retained as the original reading. It is easy to see how scribes might have
discarded an original νῦν in order to make the text simpler to understand.

Yet it is also possible that in a sentence involving such stylistic repetition, copyists
might naturally have added the third νῦν out of a conscious or unconscious desire for balance.
So, although most scholars favor the retention of this third νῦν, we are not quite convinced of its
authenticity. For purposes of argument, however, we will treat it as authentic to probe what
meaning Paul might have intended through it in light of his earlier exposition.

[684] Michel, 252, indeed reads it this way: "Zuletzt denkt Paulus an die nahe Zukunft,
in der sich das Schicksal Israels vollendet: damit auch sie 'jetzt' (= in der nahen Zukunft)
Erbarmen erfahren sollen. Es ist bezeichnend, daß Paulus die Endvollendung ganz nahe glaubt,
daß er so in diesem dritten νῦν auf die eschatologische Zukunft hinweisen kann."

[685] It has been suggested from time to time that νῦν may be understood here as a strictly
temporal reference to the remnant of Israel, i.e., Israel even now begins receiving divine mercy
in the form of the Jewish Christian remnant. But the fact that Paul's focus is on the disobedient
mass of Israelites and their future return, as well as the reality that Paul's main use of the rem-
nant concept has been to contrast faithful few to the unbelieving majority, shows this to be
unlikely.

[686] So, e.g., Cranfield, 586: "...Paul sees the time which begins with the gospel events
and extends to the Parousia as a unity. It is all the eschatological now." Likewise Volf, 194:

literary conclusion. The former view holds much attraction, but is rendered improbable by the fact that the previous two parallel occurrences of νῦν in verses 30 and 31 refer to the immediate, not eschatological, present. It seems more likely that if this occurrence is genuine, it stems from a desire on Paul's part to move his readers through rhetorical and stylistic eloquence as he draws things to a close rather than to make an enigmatic theological statement which does not easily cohere with what he has argued for so strongly in the preceding 6 verses.

b) In verse 32, Paul reaches the summit of his argument not just in this subsection but in chapters 9-11 as a whole with a rousing aphorism on the merciful purpose and activity of God in history: συνέκλεισεν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς ἀπείθειαν, ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλεήσῃ. The connective γάρ indicates particular support for the declarations of verses 30-31. The twin themes of disobedience and mercy are taken up once again and woven together finally by the dominant thread of God's purpose. In the end, Paul says, God's hardening activity among the peoples of the earth serves the primary and ultimate purpose of closing any avenue of escape from wrath except through divine mercy.

But how are we to understand the twofold τοὺς πάντας of verse 32? Does Paul intend a reference to all humanity, thereby declaring himself a universalist: God has consigned every individual to sin so that every human being will be saved in the end by mercy, and only by mercy? Or does τοὺς πάντας refer in both cases to the Jewish and Gentile people groups who

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"νῦν must thus refer to a time period, not a point in time, during which both resistance to the gospel but also God's saving mercy at different points in that period characterize Israel." Hofius ("Evangelium," 322) and Dunn (687) agree with this characterization of νῦν as the 'eschatological now', but see even further an expression of the imminence of this final display of divine mercy toward Israel.

represent humanity as a whole, in which case Paul's statement is not intended to

be all-encompassing, but rather a broad-brush description of God's ultimately

merciful activity towards His chosen people οὐ μόνον ἐξ ʾΙουδαίων ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξ

ἐθνῶν (cf. 9.24)?

In support of the former, Cranfield argues that if Paul would have

included every individual within the first τοὺς πάντας (i.e., shut up in dis-

obedience), it is difficult to refrain from attributing the same scope to the sec-

ond τοὺς πάντας (recipients of saving mercy).[687] On the face of it, this appears

reasonable. But again we must sound a note of caution: the highly stylized

nature of this concluding section with its ubiquitous use of parallelism should

keep us from drawing overly firm conclusions based simply on the cor-

respondences present. If Paul's parallelism is indeed more stylistic than

semantic in orientation, then it becomes possible that the first 'all', who are

consigned to disobedience, refers to a group or category not precisely the same

as the second 'all', who become recipients of mercy. In any case, it is both

more prudent and accurate to let the preceding, detailed discussion of chapters

9-11 inform the interpretation of this final sentence than the reverse. Secondly,

and even more important, the assumption that in this context Paul would have

included every human being in the first τοὺς πάντας is open to question. From

verse 13 onwards Paul has been concerned with the relationship between the

camp of Gentile believers and that of Jewish unbelievers. The fact that Paul

continues in verses 30 and 31 to employ the second person plural indicates that

he is still very much concerned over the attitude of Gentile Christians toward

Israel. The content of these verses once again highlights the apostle's forceful

teaching that mercy shown to the Gentiles has not replaced or nullified God's

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[687] Cranfield, 588.

merciful purpose toward Israel. Finally, the articular use of πᾶς here serves to draw out a contrast between the whole and the parts (cf. BAGD, §275.7) such that the whole represents the totality of the human race consisting of Jew and Gentile (verse 32), while the parts represent the separate groupings of Jew as distinct from Gentile (verses 30-31). Thus, God has worked at different times with different groups of humanity -- but according to the same purpose of hardening to show mercy -- so that Paul can conclude that He has consigned τοὺς πάντας (i.e., both the Jewish people and the Gentile nations) to disobedience that He might have mercy on these same groups.[688] But just as the references to Gentiles and Jews in the previous verses do not encompass all individuals within those groups, neither do these summary occurrences of τοὺς πάντας.

Thus, we conclude that τοὺς πάντας is most probably a reference to the grouping of Jews and Gentiles together rather than a quantitative description of all human beings.[689] Meyer's assertion that verse 32 is at variance with both the

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[688] Many commentators note that while this passage does not necessarily include every single individual, yet it does not in itself exclude universalism. Cranfield's cautious words express well the thoughts of the majority (588): "It would seem to be wisdom here *both* to refrain from thinking to establish on the basis of this verse...a dogma of universalism, *and also* to refrain from treating the solemn and urgent warnings, of which the NT assuredly contains an abundance, as clear warrant for confidently proclaiming the certainty of the final exclusion of some from the embrace of God's mercy."

However, Paul began all this discussion by solemnly testifying of his intense anguish over the fate of his unbelieving kinsmen (9.2-3), whose destiny he likens to that of Pharaoh (9.16-18), whom he further describes as vessels of wrath made for destruction (9.22), and to whom he applies Isaiah's startling pronouncements of fatal judgment: "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....If the Lord of hosts had not left us children, we would have fared like Sodom and Gomorrah" (Rom 9.27-29, quoting Isa 10.22 and 1.9). In addition, Paul makes clear elsewhere in his writings that he expects there to be a division between the saved and the condemned at the end of the day (cf. for example, Rom 2.5,12; 1 Cor 1.18; 3.17; 6.9-11; 11.32; 2 Cor 2.15; 4.3; Phil 1.28; 3.18-19; 1 Thess 5.3-9, esp. v. 9; 2 Thess 1.9; 2.10-12).

We therefore agree with Murray (II:103) who concludes: "In terms of Paul's own teaching...it is impossible to regard the final clause in verse 32 as contemplating the salvation of all mankind. The context determines the scope. The apostle is thinking of Jews and Gentiles."

[689] So Althaus, 110: "Alle in 11,32 meint nicht alle einzelnen Menschen, sondern die beiden Teile der Menschheit, Juden und Heiden."

decretum reprobationis and the idea that Paul means the collective body of the elect[690] is therefore without merit. For although Paul does not speak in these terms, certainly what he says here can be seen to cohere with his earlier teaching. ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλεήσῃ should be taken to read "that God might save all who without distinction are partakers of mercy."[691] Paul says nothing to discount the hardening of individuals which results in eternal damnation; rather he is thinking here only of those groups (and individuals within those groups) who are hardened so that in the end they may be shown mercy. In the same way, the 'all' upon whom God has mercy is a reflection in the more full and complete sense of the οὓς καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς οὐ μόνον ἐξ Ἰουδαίων ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξ ἐθνῶν of 9.24. Far from opposing the idea that Paul intends the collective body of the elect, verse 32b may be seen, within the framework of what Paul has already said in 9-11 and the strongly purposive nature of 11.30-32, to indicate that God carries through His elective purpose to the very end, choosing and saving the full number of His elect from both the Jews and the Gentiles. Though election and reprobation are not part of his vocabulary at this point, one should not conclude that Paul has turned his back on these concepts (particularly that of election) which formed such a strong element of his argument in chapter 9 and parts of chapter 11. Rather, Paul's goal here is to highlight God's ultimate mercy as a final answer to the question which opened Paul's discussion in 9.6a -- has God failed in His gracious purpose to be faithful to Israel? He does this by underscoring the sovereign and intentional activity of God in using the full number of Gentiles to trigger a responsiveness in 'all Israel' which will bring the large majority of Israelites alive in the final days to salvation. For Paul, this all

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[690] Meyer, 243.

[691] So Murray, II:103.

forms a part of God's mysterious plan determined long ago and now made known to all who will receive it, a plan which God is bringing to pass and will complete according to His sovereign, electing purpose -- ἵνα ἡ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένῃ (9.11c). Such a vast and glorious plan highlighting God's election of mercy leads Paul to a final paean of praise in 11.33-36. Far from limiting the concept of election to ethnic Israel or to the present church, Paul sees the electing activity of God behind both the roles of people groups within history and the salvation or damnation of individuals with regard to eternity. Paul's climactic conclusion in 11.28-32 emphasizes both the faithful and merciful character of God, and accentuates the fact that all things serve the aim of God's mercy to His chosen people.

5. Summary: Election in Romans 11

Paul's overriding concern in Romans 11 is to answer conclusively the question posed in 11.1 -- Has God finally and forever rejected the tribe of Jacob from His salvific plans? His emphatic denial in verse 2 is buttressed by three subsections which each contribute substantial support to this end. In 11.2-10, the apostle offers four proofs that ethnic Israel has not been ultimately rejected: 1) Paul himself is evidence, for as one chosen from the Jews, he has been commissioned to serve as a light to the Gentiles, thereby helping to fulfill Israel's divinely intended, strategic role in salvation history; 2) the Old Testament itself promises that God will not reject Israel; 3) God's foreknowledge of Israel guarantees the continuity of her divine election; and 4) the ongoing existence of a remnant demonstrates that God has not rejected Israel as an enduring ethnic nation, even though contemporary unbelieving Israelites are not given much hope of eternal blessing. In 11.11-24, Paul begins to take his eyes off the present situation and consider Israel as a people with both a history and a future under the protective umbrella of God's grace. In this section, he argues that

God, at some point in the indefinite, eschatological future, will gather the

πλήρωμα of unbelieving Israel into His kingdom. Israel's rejection, therefore,

will not be final. As a corporate entity, she enjoys the continuity of both a

theocratic and soteriological election. However, this says nothing about the

status of each individual comprising the nation of Israel in any one generation.

Individuals may or may not be chosen as part of this elect people in the ultimate

sense, depending solely on the free decision of God. Paul argues here that

although the majority of individuals comprising contemporary unbelieving Israel

is not chosen to salvation, nevertheless at the close of the age God will bring the

future descendants of this group into His mercy. Finally, in 11.25-32, Paul

unveils a mystery which clinches his argument that God has not rejected Israel.

Not only is Israel's hardening temporary, it is also limited in scope. After the

full number of Gentiles chosen by God has been gathered in through the Gentile

mission, then the hardening will be lifted and 'all Israel' (i.e., the vast majority,

though not necessarily every single individual belonging to the Jewish people)

will be saved. This means that the generation of Israelites alive at the end (as

opposed to all who have lived and died in unbelief up to that time) will be

redeemed. Paul supports this by appeal to the prophets, to the validity of the

divine promises to the patriarchs concerning their descendants, and to the faith-

ful, unchanging nature of God. In summary form he concludes that God's

activity has been similar toward the Gentiles and Jews alike: the divine harden-

ing to disobedience serves to keep any from boasting, and to imprison all within

the plight of disobedience from which there can be no escape except through the

mercy which God dispenses liberally among both Jew and Gentile.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Our purpose in this thesis has been to investigate Paul's understanding and use of election in the argument of Romans 9-11. Because Paul's theology would have been fundamentally shaped by his understanding of the Old Testament, as well as by sociological and theological issues of his day, we began by attempting an overview of the theme of election in the Old Testament, followed by an investigation of the role election played in the community of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a Jewish sectarian movement contemporary with the early church which demonstrated a number of striking, rudimentary sociological and theological parallels with the thought of Paul in the areas of election and predestination.

Concerning election in the Old Testament, we concluded that Israel used multiple images taken from her social, military-political, pastoral and industrial life to describe her unique, corporate relationship with God in terms of three closely interrelated roles: Israel as a people was divinely chosen to belong exclusively to Yahweh, to serve Him in worship and the nations of the world in witness, and to receive His abundant blessings. We also saw that the remnant idea gained election significance when Israel faced the prospect of her own annihilation during the time of the prophets. Because of its inherent bipolarity of meaning, the remnant concept served admirably as a bridge between a past of doom and gloom and a future of hope and glory, thereby providing the appropriate linkage for an election-rejection-restoration perspective to develop, offering hope for the future and reaffirming God's faithfulness to His original promises to the patriarchs.

In turning to the Dead Sea Scrolls, we discovered that the concept of election had undergone a radical revision. The Israelite nation as a whole is no

longer considered elect by Qumran. Instead, this designation applies only to the community of adherents in the wilderness who have separated themselves from the corrupt majority of Israel and have chosen to align themselves with the new covenant proclaimed by the Qumran leadership. The idea of election retains a corporate aspect at Qumran, but only in the sense that the group consists exclusively of those whom God has individually predestined to belong to His sifted and purified people. This new perspective on election leads those at Qumran to consider themselves the true Israel, the apocalyptic remnant, the few faithful Israelites who will be saved from the wrath to come. Thus, in contrast to general Old Testament corporate understanding of election, for the Qumran community this central concept has developed a highly individualistic sense, and is tied inextricably to the sovereign predestining activity of God who decrees the eternal destinies of all His creatures, thereby leading to a 'doctrine' of double predestination.

As we turned to Romans 9, we discovered the apostle Paul wrestling with the issue of the eternal destiny of his fellow Jews who had rejected Christ. This raised the pressing question of God's faithfulness to Israel, which Paul affirms with an argument paralleling Qumran's view of election, *mutatis mutandis*. He argues that God is faithful to the Israel of promise, a subset of larger, ethnic Israel. This 'true Israel' is composed of those individual Jews whom God predestined to belong to Him, and who as a result of their individual election by God have turned to Christ in faith -- they along with believing Gentiles comprise the "vessels of mercy predestined to eschatological glory." The rest of Israel is hardened into unbelief, and its members viewed as "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction." Thus, Paul reaches beyond a purely nationalistic concept of election to argue that God shows His faithfulness to an Israel determined by His sovereign election of individuals to eschatological salvation. For Paul in Romans 9, the concept of election plays a fundamental role in

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demonstrating God's determinative role in the constitution of eschatological Israel and the eternal destinies of the chosen and the rejected.

Romans 11, however, seems on the face of it to overrule this individualized approach to soteriological election. Paul opens his concluding discussion with the affirmation that God has not completely or finally rejected unbelieving, ethnic Israel. In verses 2-10 he presents four proofs to support this: first, he himself is evidence; second, the Old Testament itself promises that God will not reject Israel; third, divine foreknowledge of Israel guarantees the continuity of her election; and fourth, the existence of a remnant demonstrates that God is preserving the future of His people. In verses 11-24, Paul begins to look toward the eschatological future, arguing that someday God will gather the bulk of unbelieving Israel into His kingdom -- Israel's present rejection will not be final. As a corporate entity, she enjoys the continuity of both a theocratic and soteriological election. However, this does not undermine Paul's argument from Romans 9. Within the nation of Israel in any one generation, individual Jews may or may not be chosen as part of this elect people in the ultimate sense, depending solely on the free decision of God. Paul argues in this section that although the majority of individuals comprising contemporary unbelieving Israel is not chosen to salvation, nevertheless at the close of the age God will bring the future descendants of this group into His mercy. This is confirmed in verses 25-32, where the unveiling of a divine mystery discloses that after the full number of Gentiles chosen by God has been gathered in through the Gentile mission, then the hardening of Jacob will be lifted and 'all Israel' (i.e., the vast majority, though not necessarily every single individual belonging to the Jewish people and living at the end of time) will be saved. Here, at the end of history, God's individualized, electing purpose (Rom 9) and His corporate election of all Israel (Rom 11) wholly coincide, and God is fully glorified as both Jew and

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Gentile are rescued from disobedience solely through the sovereign mercy of God.

We have argued in this thesis that Paul is indeed consistent in his understanding and use of the concept of election in Romans 9-11. Drawing upon both Old Testament teaching and a tradition finding its most coherent and reasoned expression at Qumran, Paul employs the concept of election to demonstrate how God may be considered faithful to His covenant with Israel. At present, the Creator honors His word by selecting out of ethnic Israel those whom He has predestined as His children of promise. These comprise true Israel, and are recognized in Paul's day as Jews who have embraced Jesus as their Messiah. Also designated as 'the remnant', these individuals chosen by grace point forward to a future time when Israel as a nation will enjoy not simply a theocratic but also soteriological election. This is part of the mystery that Paul unveils, a fact which leads him in conclusion to a grand doxology over God's sovereign, elective purpose -- a purpose which both calls individual Jews and Gentiles completely by grace to eschatological glory *and* in the end highlights God's special election love for Israel.

Appendix: Paul's Coherence of Thought in Romans 9-11

Upon a considered reading of Romans 9-11, one is confronted with at least an apparent, if not real, logical contradiction in Paul's thought. In chapter 9, the apostle has argued that not all ethnic Israel has been divinely elected to salvation, but only the children of promise -- the rest have been predestined to hardened hearts and damnation. All of this is to demonstrate the complete sovereignty of God both soteriologically and historically, and thus explain the present rejection of the Messiah by the majority of ethnic Israel.[692] Then in chapter 11, Paul argues that the bulk of Israel (the "all Israel" of 11.26) will indeed be saved because "regarding election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers" and "the gifts and call of God are irrevocable" (11.28-29).

This raises the question of whether Paul's thought is coherent regarding God's dealings with Israel in the present and future. As would be expected, scholars are divided in their answers on this matter, with the divisions falling into three basic camps: 1) Paul's argument is hopelessly inconsistent; 2) there is a consistency in Paul's argument, but it is not logical; 3) Paul is logically consistent.

Among those holding the first view, E. P. Sanders and Heikki Räisänen are perhaps most well-known. Sanders argues that Paul faced a "problem of conflicting convictions which can be better asserted than explained."[693] Indeed, Paul's somewhat muddled ideas are not nearly as important as the feelings of

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[692] This understanding of 9.1-29 is based on our exegesis of the passage as found in chapter 4 above.

[693] *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*, 197-99.

concern, distress and hopefulness which permeate them.[694] Räisänen embraces

this approach when he asserts that the apostle

> is wrestling with a burning personal problem, attempting
> to 'square the circle,' trying different solutions....Paul's
> wrestling points to an insoluble *heilsgeschichtlich* dilemma
> in his theology. He presupposes *(a)* that God has acted in
> a decisive way in the past and given his people promises
> that cannot change or vanish, and *(b)* that God has acted
> in a decisive way in Christ and that there can be no salva-
> tion apart from Christ....Paul will have it both ways, and
> this brings him into an insoluble self-contradiction as
> regards Israel.[695]

In this work we have attempted to demonstrate that Paul's understanding of

God's sovereign electing purpose resolves this perceived contradiction.

Francis Watson may be grouped in this category as well, though he seeks

to find a thread of coherency through the lenses of the social context and func-

tion of Romans and so provides a bridge to second camp.[696]

Along with Watson, a few of the many other scholars in this second

camp call for special note. Some, such as Hübner and Dunn, argue that

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[694] Ibid., 193.

[695] "Paul, God and Israel: Romans 9-11 in Recent Research," 196. Alan Segal (*Paul the Convert*, 276-84), following Nils Dahl ("The Future of Israel" in *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission*), argues that in Romans 9-11 Paul offers three independent state-ments about God's dealings with Israel "...and it is not clear that they can all be held simultaneously. But philosophical consistency was not the purpose of Paul's remarks; rather, they express Paul's sorrow that the rest of Israel has not followed him in seeing the truth of the Christian message, combined with his desire to protect the promises of the Hebrew Bible from the allegation of inconsistency..." (276).

[696] *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 170: "...it must be recognized that the clear and coherent argument of Rom. 11 is completely at variance with the equally clear and coherent argument of Rom. 9, not to mention the rest of Romans....If one is not satisfied with the view that Paul was capable of thinking coherently only for very short periods of time, and if one rejects an artificial harmonizing exegesis, the only possible solution seems to be to examine the social context and function of Romans, to see whether an explanation can be found there."
According to Watson, Romans 1-11 as a whole finds its coherency in the fact that all its major arguments are aimed at the social reorientation of the Jewish Christian congregation in Rome away from the Jewish community and toward unity with the Gentile Christian community there (174-75). This, for Watson, is true despite his belief that the individual arguments often conflict with one another.

Romans 9 is an initial start whereby Paul hints at the solution which he only

finally unfolds in chapter 11. Others, such as Noack and N. Walter, posit that

the "new solution" of 11.13-36 was revealed to Paul spontaneously during the

dictation of chapter 11 to his amanuensis.[697]

More recently Richard Bell has revived the argument that Romans 9-11

can only be understood coherently from a salvation-history point of view.[698] He

argues that a central Old Testament background for these chapters is

Deuteronomy 32, a passage containing a similar "contradiction" to that found in

Romans 9 and 11 (i.e., the judgment of Israel *and then* the final salvation of

Israel. This parallel "leads to the insight that Rom. 9-11 is to be understood in

terms of salvation history."[699] In light of this, Paul's statements are not to be

given equal weight but judged according to a correct understanding of the divine

purpose and flow of *Heilsgeschichte*, which incorporates the jealousy motif

found in Dt. 32. Bell's thesis is helpful but not thorough in explaining Paul's

understanding of election in Romans 9-11. It provides an adequate framework

for assessing the activity of God with regard to Israel on a macro-soteriological

level from the present on into the future. Yet it fails to deal with the intricacies

of election on the micro-soteriological level. Paul is interested, as we sought to

demonstrate above, in the divine election and destiny of both individuals and the

nation as a whole. Further, while he is concerned with how this election will

play out in history, his ultimate interest is in the final goal of the salvation of

both Jews and Gentiles and the role God's electing purpose holds in bringing

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[697] "Current and Backwater," 165; "Zur Interpretation," 176, respectively. Walter argues that this revelation was a surprise not only to Paul's readers but to the apostle himself.

[698] *Provoked to Jealousy*, 56-58, 57: "When the *Heilsgeschichte* is ignored, problems are bound to arise."

[699] Ibid, 58.

about this end. Because Bell focuses on the jealousy motif as central for understanding Romans 9-11 he inevitably gives chapter 9 short shrift (since the jealousy motif does not appear until chapter 10), and hence fails to wrestle adequately with Paul's stress on individual election in the opening phases of "the Israel question." One is led to wonder why, if the jealousy motif is so central to Paul's thinking in this section of Romans, Paul did not begin with and weave this thread throughout his argument.

On a grander scale, Richard B. Hays[700] argues that Romans 9-11 is laced through and through with direct references and indirect allusions to a multitude of Old Testament texts which definitively shape Paul's flow of argument.[701] These texts work overtly as prooftextual supports and covertly to provide a background ethos in the midst of which Paul's declarations concerning God's faithfulness to Israel are securely anchored.[702] However, Hays says little regarding Paul's consistency of thought in Romans 9-11. He seems to intimate that Paul's thought is consistent[703] in that it flows out of his understanding of various Scriptural texts which focus on God's dealings with Israel throughout her history, but he never takes up the issue of Paul's apparent contradiction of thought between Romans 9 and Romans 11 and how it should be understood.

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[700] *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989; cf. especially xi-xiii, 61-71.

[701] He writes, 64: "The intertextual linkages in Romans 9-11, then, are structural girders, not filigrees. If Paul's reading of Scripture in these chapters is flimsy, then there is little hope for his proclamation to stand." Again, 66: "...the prophetic subtexts keep the concern for which the chapter [Rom 9] began -- the fate of Israel -- sharply in focus."

[702] Ibid., 70. Hays affirms that "Scripture's poetry and narratives materially govern his [Paul's] confession. Consequently, Paul's sentences carry the weight of meaning acquired through earlier narrative and liturgical utterance. This allusive evocation of earlier declarations of God's faithfulness to Israel covertly undergirds the burden of Paul's argument."

[703] Referring to the second chapter of his book, Hays summarizes its contents in his introduction (p. xiii) by affirming: "Paul answers these questions [concerning the faithfulness of God toward Israel] with an intricately woven argument from Scripture, whose logic and effects are traced in this chapter."

In our thesis, we have sought to discover whether or not it may be maintained with exegetical fairness that Paul's understanding of election in Romans 9-11 is logically consistent. The motivation behind this quest was threefold: first, as can be seen from the short summary above a majority of modern scholars have abandoned any vestige of belief that Paul's arguments in Romans 9 and 11 demonstrate "philosophical consistency," to use Alan Segal's phrase. Hence, it was a challenge to seek for a way in which Paul's election thought might be logically understandable -- if such a way existed, it would help unlock the mind of the apostle with regard to his overall argument in this section. Secondly, based on the work of Mortimer Adler,[704] we accepted as an axiom that it is always better when reading a difficult passage to assume that the author's thought is internally consistent (at least to the author) and that one has simply not yet understood the author's flow of thought (and thus has more investigative work to do) instead of concluding too quickly that the author is inconsistent in his thinking and or presentation.[705] Thirdly, all who know well the writings of the apostle Paul would agree that he is capable of dazzling displays of philosophical logic which underpin his theological argumentation. Since it is beyond dispute that Paul is capable of thinking in a logically coherent manner with regard to complicated theological topics, we are justified in giving him the benefit of the doubt as we begin investigating his thought in Romans 9-11. Additionally, the fact that the topic of God's faithfulness toward Israel was not a

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[704] See *How to Read a Book*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972.

[705] Ibid., 144-45: "If you have done everything that can be expected of you and still do not understand, it may be because the book is unintelligible. The presumption, however, is in favor of the book, especially if it is a good one. In reading good books, failure to understand is usually the reader's fault. Hence he is obligated to stay with the task imposed by the first two stages of analytical reading a long time before entering on the third. When you say 'I don't understand,' watch your tone of voice. Be sure it concedes the possibility that it may not be the author's fault."

Appendix

new area of thought for Paul but rather one which he had pondered deeply over perhaps two decades of pointed interaction with and testing by fellow Jews leads to the reasonable assumption that the apostle felt his arguments to be coherent and persuasive to others. An obvious logical fallacy would doom his presentation to irrelevance.

Our thesis, then, is an attempt to understand Paul's argumentation of Romans 9-11 in a manner which demonstrates logical consistency and coherence by ferreting out his understanding and usage of the complex concept of election. The degree to which we have succeeded in this venture is, of course, up to the reader to determine.

Appendix

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