ISRAEL'S NON-ENTRY INTO MESSIANIC SALVATION: REFLECTIONS ON THE MEANING OF ROMANS 9-11 IN THE LIGHT OF ANTI-JUDAISM

MICHELE LYNN GILLINGHAM

Memorial
University of Newfoundland

School of Graduate Studies
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by

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ABSTRACT

In Romans 9-11 Paul was attempting to reconcile two apparently contradictory affirmations: (a) that God is faithful to his divine promises to Israel (the "election of Israel"), and (b) that the salvation of God is universally offered and does not imply the election of Israel. Paul struggled to uphold both the particularism of Israel as God's chosen people and the universalism of the gospel as revealed in Christ.

Traditional interpreters of Romans 9-11 have concluded that for Paul Christianity superseded Judaism and that the present position of the Jews is now one of "wrath". Pre-Holocaust interpretations tended to place Judaism in a position of being the precursor to Christianity without validity as an independent path to God. Paul, in Romans 9-11, was trying to understand the purpose of Israel's unbelief in light of the gospel[1], yet classical exegetes understood his purpose to be "why some are saved and others damned"[2]. Ben Meyer offers an interesting explanation: "Having lost interest in Israel as the prime heir of messianic salvation, Gentile Christianity failed to catch onto the fact that this was a central interest of Paul's...

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[1]Unpublished Manuscript by Ben F. Meyer, "Romans," 183.

[2]Ibid., 183.

Salvation of the Gentiles seemed self-evidently right"[3].

With the advent of the Holocaust, Christians have become more sensitive to taking or upholding a position of Christian superiority as this may be construed as anti-Jewish. This point becomes especially valid because of the special relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Unlike other religions, such as Hinduism or Buddhism, which may also contradict the Christian viewpoint, Judaism and Christianity share a vital connection. They share a body of sacred literature in the Hebrew scriptures and they share a religious history. When one considers supersessionism in such a context, it takes on a new emphasis. Other religions may offer points of contention but when the Christian religion is said to have replaced Judaism, "replaced" in the sense of something better, an anti-Jewish sentiment begins to emerge. Such a position denigrates the validity of Judaism as well as its importance as a precursor to Christianity for Christians.

Chrysostom railed against Judaizing by promoting Christianity as the superior ideal. Augustine was convinced that since all are born into a state of Original Sin, belief and conversion in Christ was the only saving grace. Calvin argued that the way to salvation was predestination, which

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[3]Ibid., 183.

claimed that non-believers were vessels of wrath, and Luther's "Death to the Law" stance was meant to promote the omnipotence of God. But with the terrible anguish of the Holocaust comes the necessary motivation to reexamine Paul's words and to question any anti-Judaism that may have been added by past exegesis.

To argue that Paul believed that Christianity alone would bring salvation is to argue against Paul's own words: "All Israel will be saved"(Rom 11:26). Paul never claims that the Jews will convert at the end of the present age or that Judaism is no longer a valid path to God. Modern interpreters such as Dunn, Sanders and Williamson, as well as Ruethers and Gaston, have tried a new approach to reading Paul because the result of an anti-Jewish interpretation of Romans 9-11 is the contradiction of Paul's own words and purposes. The Jewish context in which he lived and wrote is an inherent part of his development and not only is it necessary to understand him in this context, but it is possible to interpret him in a manner free of anti-Judaism.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABR	Australian Biblical Review
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
IB	Interpreter's Bible
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
MSJ	Master's Seminary Journal
NIB	New Interpreter's Bible
NTS	New Testament Studies
RB	Revue Biblique
RevExp	Review and Expositor
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
TrinJ	Trinity Journal
WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal

Bible Editions:

The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1962).

The Greek New Testament (Germany: United Bible Societies, 1966).

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Question

The question of Israel's rejection of Jesus as the Messiah has challenged interpreters for 2000 years. The Jews were 'chosen' by God or elected, to use a Pauline term. The difficulty arises however, when one observes the Gentile acceptance of Jesus as the expected long-awaited Jewish Messiah, while at the same time, Jesus as Messiah was rejected by a majority of the Jews. What did this mean for the faithfulness of God to His promises to His chosen Israel? Did the covenant still stand or did Christianity supersede Judaism and Israel as a valid path to God?

It is certainly the case that Christianity appropriated Jewish history and its teachings, even as it sheds such Jewish doctrine as circumcision and Torah. But does this mean that Judaism has come to an end, fulfilled by the appearance of Christ? It appears that Paul expected his kinsmen "according to the flesh" to accept Jesus as Messiah, as he himself did, and it is with anguish that he describes their present condition. Romans 1-8 presents Paul's perspective on how the world has changed because of the presence of the Messiah: Gentiles have been welcomed into God's people under the umbrella of universal salvation, the Law has increased sin and it is faith, not works, which

leads to salvation. The dilemma, however, arises in Romans 9-11.

Paul presents his dilemma in the form of three questions: Ουχ οιον δε οτι εκπεπτωκεν ο λογος του θεου· (Romans 9:6a); μη αδικια παρα τῶ θεῶ· (Romans 9:14); μη απωσατο ο θεος τον λαον αυτου; (Romans 11:1). The Paul who preached in chapters 1-8 is absent from chapters 9-11. Paul knows that if his argument, begun in chapters 1-8, continues to its logical conclusion, the result will mean the rejection of the Jews from the salvation of God. Unless they convert to Christianity, and accept Jesus as Messiah, they will continue to be rejected and not even their "chosen" status will save them.

But Paul does not end his argument with this conclusion. Had he done so, there would be no bridge between the Jewish and Christian worlds. The Jews who did not have faith in Jesus as Messiah would be forever outside the realm of God's salvation. Unfortunately, from classical times, even as early as the third century, to the present, this is the point at which many Pauline interpreters concluded their analysis. But to do so does a disservice to both Paul and his letter to the Romans, most particularly chapter 11. Here, one encounters a shift in Paul's argument. Romans 11 begins with an emphatic affirmation:

God has not rejected His people. Despite Paul's often negative descriptions of the Law, his opposition of faith and Law, and his emphatic claim that Christ is the *telos* of the Law, his logic, in chapter 11, takes a surprising turn. Having determined that the majority of Israel will not come to accept Jesus as Messiah, Paul struggles to develop or describe a method of salvation which will uphold both the promises of Yahweh to His chosen people and the notion of a universal salvation; universal in the sense that it is open to both Jew and Gentiles and yet in different manners.

In this work, I attempt to trace both Paul's actual argument as well as to examine the historical exegesis of Romans 9-11. It is necessary to understand why so many interpreters came to the conclusion that the Jews were rejected entirely and to comprehend how this misunderstanding has been passed down through history. Today, the decades in the aftermath of the Holocaust have lent caution to Biblical exegesis, especially that which applies to Judaism and its relationship to Christianity. While it is outside the scope of this paper to delineate the precursors of the Holocaust, I intend to touch on this point in my conclusion. To disregard Judaism as a valid path to God and salvation in modern times is to contribute to the same anti-semitic sentiment underlying the Holocaust. While

patristic and classical exegetes did not have this in view, their rejection of Israel in the face of Christianity does contribute to a developing anti-semitism which finds its horrible culmination in the Holocaust.

I have divided this work into three chapters. In the first chapter I have focused on classical interpreters and a general examination of their interpretation of Romans 9-11. In order to undertake any major work on Paul, or indeed any ancient author, it is important to observe how analyses of him have developed throughout history. In each case I have analyzed the arguments of the exegetes, paying careful attention to the specific polemics which guided or influenced their interpretation. I have compared their particular analysis with Paul's words in the original text, in order to determine how well the two coincide. Often, the polemic or goal of the classical exegete contradicted Paul's intent, at least with regard to Romans 9-11. But it is only by examining each interpreter in turn that I was able to understand the influences that their work has had on later exegetes, and even on myself to a point.

The four interpreters which I have chosen to examine in this chapter are John Chrysostom, Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther and John Calvin. Each one could be the subject of a thesis on its own, however, I focused primarily on their interpretation of Romans 9-11. An examination of each one,

and their polemical questions, provides the historical development of what is often referred to as the "Jewish Question". Could God still be faithful to His promises to elected Israel while offering salvation to the Gentiles in the form of Jesus as Messiah? Was there a way in which the Jews and the Gentiles could come to salvation by the same God without superseding both Judaism and Jewish priority? The classical exegetes say "No"; salvation was only accessible to the Jews by faith in Jesus as the Messiah. The contribution of each of these exegetes, however, is significant. Chrysostom's hostility toward the Jews is reflected in our own time and it is as incomprehensible now as it was then. Augustine's "Original Sin" and the dire state of humanity coincides well with the woes of present society, as does Martin Luther's introspective conscience. Calvin's predestination, an attempt to explain the world, is no less supported today by believers as it was then. Each interpreter tried, as I am doing in this thesis, to shed some light on Paul and his words, and like me, they used their own experience to guide them. However, today's biblical research, especially in the area of Christianity, must keep in mind the Holocaust and the dangers of intolerance.

The second chapter focuses on modern interpreters from the mid-1900s onward. I chose this particular time period

because evident in these works is a shift in biblical interpretation. Even before the Holocaust, the Jewish question was being re-examined by scholars such as Sanday and Headlam. After the Holocaust, the Jewish question was re-examined by exegetes such as W. D. Davies, E. P. Sanders and Krister Stendahl. In some of the cases, such as Sanday and Headlam, the scholars came to the same conclusions as the classical exegetes but their emphasis on the importance of the Jews was becoming increasingly evident. Davies took Pauline scholarship a step further when he examined Paul in relation to his Jewish context. The presence of the Jews, today, makes it impossible to ignore their place in Pauline Christianity and the importance Paul places on their non-acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. Sanders, a student of Davies, with his preeminent scholarship on the patterns of religion of Rabbinic Judaism and Pauline soteriology, has reshaped the nature of the debate. Finally, Stendahl comes directly to the heart of the Jewish question. He emphatically argues that Paul never meant for non-believing Israel to convert to Christianity. At this point, from Paul's own words to Stendahl, Pauline scholarship has come full circle. I intend to argue, and I believe that this is the heart of Romans 9-11, that Paul intended to uphold the priority of the Jews both in the eyes of Yahweh and himself, despite their rejection of Jesus as Messiah.

The final chapter of my thesis, "The Salvation of Israel" encompasses what has been at the heart of Pauline exegesis since Paul himself wrote the epistles. Every interpreter whom I have examined has been concerned with this question: if the Jews, the "chosen people", reject Jesus as Messiah, and then are rejected themselves, is God still faithful to His promises which He made first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles? If the answer is "No" to the Jews, then there is no guarantee that He will be faithful to His promises to the Gentiles. Unfortunately, the solution to this problem which has been reached by almost every exegete whom I have examined is that the rules have changed: God has offered a new method of salvation, through Jesus as the Messiah, and thus salvation is available only by confessing a belief in him. This does not resolve the problem of God's faithfulness to the Jews however, and does a grave injustice to both Judaism and the Jewish people.

I have examined both classical and modern Pauline interpretation, and I have come to the conclusion that there are three potential theories relating to the salvation of Israel, at least based on Romans. Although I focus primarily on the words of Paul and the scriptural references which he chooses to support his position, it is possible to observe the influence of the major exegetes in each of the three theories. The predominant theory, and the one which

has received the most support, is what I will refer to as the "conversion theory". Its meaning is self-evident. It stipulates that the only path to the salvation of God is by belief in Jesus as Messiah. This theory runs the risk of introducing an unbridgeable chasm between Judaism and Christianity and leads to supersessionism. The second theory is called "Non-Conversion", although "Dual Covenants" is perhaps a better label. This theory maintains that there has always been two paths to, or covenants with, God. The first was the Jewish covenant with Yahweh, connected to the Torah. The second is the new dispensation offered in Christ to the Gentiles, and other believers. The appeal of this theory is that it allows Judaism to play a role alongside Christianity. There is, however, very little support for this theory in Romans, or any other letter of Paul for that matter. The third theory is the "*Sonderweg*" theory of salvation. This theory presents a special, and unknown, salvation for the Jews. It is based on the mystery clause of Romans 11:25ff. This is the theory which I support and I base my argument on the shift in argument which occurs in Romans between chapters 1-10 and chapter 11. I also intend to take the opportunity to discuss the implications of the conversion theory, which is the one which has held sway for thousands of years. I mentioned earlier that this theory

can lead to an anti-semitic sentiment. It is important, more now than ever, to prevent the repetition of past mistakes. Nothing can change or lessen the horror of the Holocaust or the levels of anti-semitism which it contained. But biblical studies has undergone a long-needed transformation in its approach to the relationship between Judaism and Christianity as a result. Examining and understanding the past is important but it is necessary to remember that context determines content and polemic determines results. Today, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, our context must reflect this. That being said, it is also important to examine Paul's text as it stands without attempting to read into it a modern perspective. An interpreter must be precariously balanced between upholding Paul's argument that God is faithful to His promises to the Jews and preventing the addition of anything that is not originally in the text itself in order to be inoffensive to religious belief.

The question that I am attempting to answer is more complex than whether Paul was arguing for the faithfulness of God to his promises to Israel (particularism) or the universalism of his grace. The question itself involves several important points which I intend to argue in my thesis. First, a careful reading of Romans 9-11 will show that Paul did not believe that the Jews had been rejected

and that Christianity did not supersede Judaism. I will also argue that there is no conflict between the ideas of universalism and particularism in the case of Paul. Paul has no difficulty with this, as the one, particularism, served to bring the word of God to the Jews and the second, universalism, served to bring that salvation to another people. The apparent "rejection" of the Jews aided this purpose. God is eternally faithful, from the beginning to the Jews and now at the same time, to the Gentiles.

Numerous articles and books have delved into this debate and I intend to analyze their findings. I believe that the claim that Christian universalism has superseded the particularism of Judaism has lead to a tradition of anti-semitism which has lasted 2000 years. It resulted in racism and was a partial precursor to the Holocaust. Church laws, Synods and Councils throughout the last 2000 years have enacted laws and church policies to prohibit many Jewish rights and privileges. By understanding the question in Romans 9-11 as one only of "rejection" of the Jews is to misunderstand Paul's own words with serious implications.

1.2 The Argument

1.2.1 Chapter 1: Classical Interpretations of Romans 9-11

For this section I have chosen the following five interpreters: Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, Luther and Calvin. I have chosen these for the primary reason that in each case their particular questions or polemic determines their answers. In each case the desire to uphold the primacy of God and the priority of Christianity gave their words an anti-semitic thrust. Origen and Chrysostom railed against Judaizing because it challenged the "supremacy" of the new religion. Augustine determined that non-believing Jews were rejected because the Law could not remove them from a state of sin. Calvin's preoccupation with predestination led him to a divisive solution; namely that some are saved and some are damned because he was trying to uphold the omnipotence of God. Luther also argues against the Law and Judaism in order to promote Christianity as the true religion.

1.2.1.1 John Chrysostom

John Chrysostom wrote a number of sermons against Judaizing Christians, claiming that any Jewish practice or belief was fraudulent because it was not Christianity. He

strongly upheld free will as a measure against the Jews because he argued that they wilfully chose to reject Christ[4]. Chrysostom upheld the omnipotence of God and considered any Judaizing act as a danger.

1.2.1.2 Augustine of Hippo

Augustine is primarily concerned with the state of the human condition. Because every person is born into a state of original sin, grace is required to remove this sin. But this grace is not based on merit, according to Augustine[5]. It is instead based upon God's foreknowledge of a person's character. He argues that a Christian possesses the character required for grace and is thus moved to perform good works. On the other hand, he argues that Jews perform good works in order to attain salvation and thus their good works are attributable to their own actions and not to God[6]. The result of these, for Augustine, is that the unbelieving Jews are vessels created for wrath[7].

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[4]John Gager, The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 118-119.

[5]Augustine of Hippo, Augustine on Romans: Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans. Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans trans. Paula Landes, (California: Scholar's Press, 1982), 128.

[6]Augustine, 35.

[7]Ibid., 35.

Augustine distinguishes works based on faith and as a result, grace, from works that are "designed" to attain this grace and salvation. According to Augustine, the Jews went wrong because their works were not based on faith and because they rejected Jesus as the Christ. Since all people are born into a state of sin, and since the only means of removing oneself from such a position is faith in Christ, the unbelieving Jews are rejected. The Jewish Law cannot provide this means[8]. It compels the Jews to remain in this state of sin.

1.2.1.3 Martin Luther

Luther was troubled with the problem of human imperfection. According to him, Jewish Law, based on works-righteousness, could not provide salvation because it was impossible to fulfil. He turned to the idea of grace as the only means possible. The Jews, despite their advantages as the "Chosen People", were rejected because their dependence on the Law was not grounded in faith in Christ[9]. But he understands this rejection as necessary to the plan of God

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[8]David Hurst (tr), Bede the Venerable: Excerpts from the Works of Saint Augustine on the letters of the Blessed Apostle Paul (Michigan: Cistercian Publishing, 1999), 91.

[9]Martin Luther, Luther's Works (v25): Lectures on Romans Oswald, Hilton (ed.) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), 79.

because it provides the means of salvation to the Gentiles who were both outside of the Law and amenable to being justified by faith not Law or works[10]. The Jews, he argues, are also culpable in their own rejection. They heard the message because it was universal and it was foreseen by the prophets (Romans 10:18-21). But the purpose of this rejection was to bring salvation to the Gentiles. The rejection will be temporary until the "full number of Gentiles" are brought in, and when this occurs the Jews will be welcomed back providing they accept Jesus as the Christ. Luther believes the Jews were rejected because of their lack of faith and the Law no longer retains any validity.

1.2.1.4 John Calvin

Calvin is preoccupied with the notion of predestination particularly as it applies to upholding the primacy of God's power. He argues that any covenant with God must be valid otherwise it would challenge the power of God, therefore, he claims the Jewish covenant was improperly obeyed[11]. He supports this notion by arguing that God's promise to Abraham and his seed was given in such a way that "his

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[10]Ibid., 404.

[11]John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries: The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians (Mackenzie, Ross [tr], Michigan:Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973),192.

inheritance does not relate to all descendants without distinction", thus denying the election of Israel as the chosen people[12]. He argues that the Jews were elected in a 'general' election but not the 'true' election, which is reserved for all who have faith in Christ. God can elect any person he chooses and this, according to Calvin, is evident in the Scriptures when God chooses Isaac and Jacob over Ishmael and Esau[13]. This divine election does not challenge free will, however, because one can choose whether to accept this grace. There are several problems inherent in Calvin's assessment of Paul. First, if he is correct, then when God chose Israel to be his people, they were already destined to be vessels of wrath. Also, contrary to Calvin's claim on the importance of free will, the idea of one created for wrath or mercy without any appeal to character, morals or deeds does indeed diminish free will.

1.2.2 Chapter 2: Modern Interpretations of Romans 9-11

It is interesting to examine the interpretations that developed in the years after the Holocaust. Some shifts in perspective were occurring at this time. Interpreters had

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[12]Ibid., 197.

[13]Ibid., 198.

come to the realization that biblical exegesis had contained the roots of anti-semitism that may in part have contributed to the Holocaust. I have chosen Sanday and Headlam, Krister Stendahl, W.D. Davies and E.P. Sanders because I believe that within each there is reflected a shift in the typical ideological interpretations.

1.2.2.1 Sanday and Headlam

Sanday and Headlam ask the same questions with which this effort is concerned: that of the reconcilability of the faithfulness of God to Jewish promises and of the present universal aspect of his grace. They agree that these are reconcilable because they expect the conversion of the Jews to Christianity now or in the future[14]. They argue that Israel was chosen to serve a purpose and that was to bring the religion of God to other people[15]. The particularism that once ruled Israel is not superseded by universalism but added to it. The Jews were ultimately rejected because they based their attainment of salvation on works and not faith but an underlying purpose of the rejection was to provide Gentiles with the means of salvation[16]. The Jews are

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[14]Sanday & Headlam, 226.

[15]Ibid, 250.

[16]Ibid, 262.

culpable in their own rejection but will be welcomed back once they accept Jesus as the Christ[17]. Sanday and Headlam ask the right questions but still uphold some of the traditional elements of interpretation such as Jewish rejection, Gentile supersession and the future conversion of the Jews.

1.2.2.2 W. D. Davies

Davies is also concerned with the faithfulness of God to his divine promises to Israel and with whether Jewish conversion is required for their salvation. He understands that Israel's rejection of the gospel posed a challenge to the validity of the gospel[18]. Davies argues that Paul in Romans 9-11 presented two concepts: that of the saved remnant and God's salvific-historical plan of election[19]. Biblical evidence demonstrates that some have always been chosen over others as in the cases of Jacob and Esau and Ishmael and Isaac.

Davies asks if a future conversion of the Jews is anti-semitic. He argues that if this conversion is understood as

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[17]Ibid., 278.

[18]W.D. Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel," NTS (24) 4-39.

[19]Ibid., 14.

the "ultimate disappearance of the church"[20] then, it is possible to claim an anti-Jewish component. But because Paul associates Abraham with both the Gentile faith and the progeny of Israel, Davies argues that anti-semitic claims are illegitimate[21]. He finds it difficult to comprehend why many have overlooked Paul's understanding of the gospel "in terms (not) of moving into a new religion but of having found the final expression... of the Jewish tradition"[22]. It is important to examine Paul within his Jewish context, otherwise it will appear that Paul's theology meant "the denigration and rejection of Judaism and the people of Israel as a totality"[23]. Despite this, Davies claims that the future conversion was not necessary because Paul himself continued to be an Israelite[24]. He argues that "[salvation] does not always imply conversion" and Paul does not understand salvation in terms of "the abandonment of ethnic differences"[25].

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[20]Ibid., 18.

[21]Ibid., 18.

[22]Ibid., 20.

[23]Ibid., 22.

[24]Ibid., 23.

[25]Ibid., 24.

1.2.2.3 Krister Stendahl

Romans 9-11, according to Stendahl, is the climax of the letter and present "reflections on the... church and the Jewish people"[26]. He also argues that Paul never understood Israelite salvation in terms of a messianic conversion[27]. Stendahl argues that in later Pauline exegesis the Jewish context was disregarded. When it was later reintroduced "the church picked up the negative side of the 'mystery'- Israel's 'NO' to Jesus Christ- but totally missed the warning against conceit and feelings of superiority"[28]. The Jews were "written off as God-killers and as stereotypes for wrong attitudes toward God"[29].

In Romans, according to Stendahl, Paul attempted to understand God's plan and his own place in it. Paul cites scriptural texts which prophesies that once Israel accepts their promised Messiah, all could be saved[30]. But the mystery in Romans revealed a change in God's plan: "Now it was the 'NO' of the Jews, their non-acceptance of the Messiah, which opened up the possibility of the 'YES' of the

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[26]Krister Stendahl, Paul among the Jews and Gentiles (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 4.

[27]Ibid., 4.

[28]Ibid., 5.

[29]Ibid., 5.

[30]Ibid., 28.

Gentiles"[31]. But this plan did not require a conversion of the Jews[32]. Stendahl instead argues that "Israel will be saved but not through gospel preaching... Christ at his coming will draw Israel to himself"[33]. Paul's words were not the antithesis of Judaism but rather a defense of the "rights of Gentile converts to be full and genuine heirs to the promises of God to Israel"[34].

1.2.2.4 E.P. Sanders

Sanders disagrees with Stendahl on the issue of Jewish conversion. Paul, he argues, requires faith in Jesus Christ for any who desire salvation[35]. Sanders argues that this idea was influenced by early Jewish thinking in which most Jews "who gave the issue any consideration would have expected the Gentiles to be converted to the true (Jewish)

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[31]Ibid., 28.

[32]Reidar Hvalvik, "A '*Sonderweg*' for Israel: A Critical Examination of a Current Interpretation of Romans 11:25-27," JSOT 38 (1990), 88.

[33]Mark Harding, "The Salvation of Israel and the Logic of Romans 11:11-36," ABR 46 (1998), 67.

[34]James D.G. Dunn, "The Justice of God," JTS 43:1 (1992), 5.

[35]Sidney G. Hall, Christian Anti-Semitism and Paul's Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 22; from Sanders, Paul, the Law and the Jewish People (PLJP) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 171-2.

religion at the end of this age"[36]. Since faith in Christ is required for salvation according to Paul, the Jews were in the wrong because of their emphasis on law and works-righteousness.

Sanders argues that there are three convictions underlying Romans : (a) that God provides a universal salvation for all through Christ; (b) that ethnic privilege no longer exists and Jews and Gentiles share equally; and (c) that Paul saw himself as appointed by God to be the Gentile Apostle[37]. These lend credence to Sander's claim that "Paul denied two pillars common to all forms of Judaism: the election of Israel and the faithfulness to the Mosaic Law"[38]. But Sanders argues that this is not anti-semitic because Paul starts from the "premise of faith in Jesus as the Christ... Paul's only criticism of Judaism was that it did not accept this premise"[39]. However, Paul,

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[36]Bruce W. Longnecker, "Different Answers to Different Issues: Israel, the Gentiles and Salvation History in Romans 9-11," JSNT 36 (1989), 64; from Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, 216-218.

[37]Terence L. Donaldson, "Riches for the Gentiles (Romans 11:12): Israel's Rejection and Paul's Gentile Mission," JBL 112:1 (1993), 90; from Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion (PPJ) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

[38]Mary Ann Getty, "Paul on the Covenants and the Future of Israel," BTB 17:3 (1987), 95; from Sanders, PLJP 208-7.

[39]Robert Jewett, "The Law and the Coexistence of Jews and Gentiles in Romans," Interpretation Oct. (1985), 347.

according to Sanders, denied the effectiveness of the Jewish covenant for salvation "thus consciously denying the basis of Judaism"[40].

Sanders sees Paul's theology as antithetical to Judaism. Judaism, he argues, is a type of covenantal nomism and is governed by faith and God and accepted through obedience to the law[41]. Paul's theology, however, is based upon faith in Christ and salvation through it[42]. But, he argues, this does not mean that their unbelief in Christ resulted in their failure to attain righteousness[43]. The Jews are presently hardened to "allow the completion of the Gentile mission"[44]. Upon its completion, Israel will be moved by jealousy and will be saved but this salvation is indelibly connected to Christ[45]. The olive tree analogy supports this, he argues, because in it "[T]here is only one olive tree, and the condition of being a 'branch' is

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[40]Gager, 203.

[41]E.P. Sanders, "Patterns of Religion in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: A Holistic Method of Comparison," HTR 66(1973) 476.

[42]Sanders PPJ 441-2.

[43]E.P. Sanders, Paul, the Law and the Jewish People (London: SCM Press, 1985), 37.

[44]Sanders, PLJP, 193.

[45]Ibid., 194.

'faith'"[46].

1.2.3 (Re)interpreting Romans 9-11

This section of my thesis is concerned with whether or not the election of Israel and the faithfulness of God can be reconciled with the universalism of the gospel in Romans 9-11. The question to ask is if Jewish salvation will require a conversion to Christianity and the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah.

Among modern interpretations emerge four schools of thought. The first claims that God's faithfulness upholds the election of Israel and its advocates include Dunn, Stendahl, and Beker. The second argues that God's faithfulness is fulfilled by Christ and is held by Getty, Jewett and Longnecker. The third claims that God's universalism requires Jewish conversion and is argued by Talbert, Sloan and Harding. The fourth is the notion of a "*Sonderweg*" or a special method of salvation for the Jews. Hvalvik disputes this idea while Stendahl argues that if conversion is not necessary there must be a special salvific method i.e., dual covenants. This chapter will examine each in order to determine which is most applicable to Romans 9-11.

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[46]Ibid., 195.

1.2.3.1 Conversion Theory: Faithfulness of God is fulfilled in Christ

This position stresses that God is faithful to the Jews through Christ and a rejection of Jesus as the Christ is a rejection of God's promises. In this case, conversion is a requirement.

Getty argues that the Jews were culpable in their rejection[47], from their unenlightened zeal to their blindness and disobedience. But she argues that the purpose of their rejection was to bring salvation to the Gentiles[48]. She argues that for Paul the "promises of the covenant with Israel are being fulfilled. The present witnesses to the fidelity of God"[49]. She admits that Paul debates the election of Israel with the universalism of God's message but argues that for Paul God will "reconcile Jew and Gentile into a single Israel" fulfilled by Christ[50]. She admits that the Jews have an election as a chosen people but now

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[47]Mary Ann Getty, "Paul and the Salvation of Israel: A Perspective on Romans 9-11," CBQ 50 (1988), 459.

[48]Ibid., 459.

[49]Ibid., 461.

[50]Ibid., 460.

there is no difference in the way people are saved[51].

Longnecker argues that in 11:11-24 "Paul reveals his expectation that all Israel will become incorporated into the [Christian] community of faith"[52]. Jewish unbelievers would be excluded[53]. Despite this, he argues that God has not "transferred his favour to the Gentiles", but since Christ is the fulfilment of God's faithfulness, the "Jewish birthright is complete only in Christian faith"[54].

This position stresses that for the grace and faithfulness of God to be universal, and the acceptance of Jesus as the Christ is necessary. The gospel is given universally through faith in Christ.

Talbert argues that the heart of Romans 9-11 is whether "Jews [and] Gentiles are deemed righteous by God in the same way, i.e. on the basis of the faith in Christ"[55]. He argues that Israel has always been divided into those who belong by birth and by promise, and God offers salvation to the latter group[56]. But now that the Jews have refused to accept Jesus

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[51]Getty, "Paul on the Covenants", 96.

[52]Longnecker, 99.

[53]Ibid., 102.

[54]Ibid., 105.

[55]Charles Talbert, "Paul on the Covenant," RevExp 84:2 (1987), 302.

[56]Ibid., 303.

as Messiah they belong only by birth and not by promise.

Sloan claims that Paul argues against the election of the Jews, especially with regard to the law. He argues that the law has led to sin, that humanity is incapable of fulfilling the law, and that since only Christ can save, the law cannot[57]. Since the Gentiles were saved apart from the law, "salvation must happen apart from the law"[58]. He concludes that the fault "lies in Israel's failure to arrive at Christ as the revealed goal of [their] pursuit"[59].

Harding also attributes the rejection of the Jews to their own culpability. He claims that "Israel has closed itself off from the justification from God that results from faith in Christ"[60]. He agrees with Stendahl that Israel will not be saved through the preaching of the gospel but he argues that they will convert at the time of the Parousia, when "Christ at his coming will draw Israel to himself"[61].

The Faithfulness of God Upholds the Election of the Jews.

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[57]Robert B. Sloan, "Paul and the Law: Why the Law Cannot Save," Novum Testamentum 33:1 (1991), 42.

[58]Ibid., 43.

[59]Ibid., 43.

[60]Ibid, 58.

[61]Ibid., 67.

1.2.3.2 Non-Conversion

This position upholds the faithfulness of God to the Jews but does not necessarily require a conversion in the present or future age to Christianity. Dunn argues that much of Pauline interpretation is based on Luther, which is in itself a misunderstanding of Paul[62]. He argues that Paul never understood Christianity to be a conversion from Judaism but rather a conversion within Judaism[63]. He also argues that Paul's claim that there is no distinction between Jews and Greeks does not mean that both approach salvation in the same way but rather that salvation was equally offered to both[64].

According to Beker, Paul is concerned with stressing "the continuity of the gospel with God's promises to his covenant people Israel"[65]. But the universalism of God's message does not override the particularism or election of the Jews[66]. Paul recognizes that these are two separate peoples. Beker stresses that it is important to uphold the

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[62]Dunn, "Justice", 2.

[63]Ibid., 6.

[64]Ibid., 9.

[65]J.C. Beker, "The Faithfulness of God and the Priority of Israel in Paul's Letter to the Romans." HTR 79:1-3 (1986), 12.

[66]Ibid., 13.

election of the Jews because "at stake is nothing less than the faithfulness of God"[67]. If God would reject the Jews then he would reject Christians just as easily.

1.2.3.3 Sonderweg

This position upholds both the faithfulness of God to the Jews and the universalism of his grace. But it goes a step further and argues that the Jews and Christians attain salvation in different ways. Since Christian salvation is through Christ, Jewish salvation must be by a different means. Hence the idea of a *Sonderweg* or special method of salvation. The notion of dual covenants is an example of this.

Jewett argues that the faithfulness of God to Israel is not compromised by the inclusion of Gentiles[68], but does not require faith in Christ. Despite their unbelief Israel will be saved and Christianity does not displace Judaism[69]. Jewett agrees with Lapide that Paul saw two routes of salvation- one for Gentiles and one for Jews[70] and with Gager that Paul never claims that the Jews failed because

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[67]Ibid., 14.

[68]Jewett, 345.

[69]Ibid., 345.

[70]Ibid., 347.

they did not become Christians[71].

Stendahl first argued that salvation history in Paul must lead "to the point where the Jews accept this same Jesus as their Messiah" but later decided that there is no indication in Paul that the Jews must accept Jesus as Messiah"[72]. He argues that the Jews "have a special way of salvation, a *Sonderweg*"[73].

Hvalvik disagrees with any notion of a *Sonderweg* for Israel and argues that both Jews and Christians are equally "justified through faith in Jesus Christ"[74]. The rejected Jews will be "grafted in", when they give up their unbelief. The 'mystery' in 11:25 does not suggest that a specific salvation exists for the Jews but rather that "the salvation of the Gentiles- according to God's plan- is a presupposition and condition for the salvation of 'all Israel'"[75].

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[71]Ibid., 348.

[72]Hvalvik, 87.

[73]Ibid., 88.

[74]Ibid., 89.

[75]Ibid., 96.

2.0 CLASSICAL EXEGESIS OF ROMANS 9-11

2.1 Introduction

Romans 9-11 considers the exclusion of the Jews from the messianic salvation offered by the death and resurrection of Jesus. In this chapter I intend to examine some of the important classical interpreters and their analysis of Romans 9-11. The four interpreters whom I will focus on are John Chrysostom, Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther and John Calvin. Despite the fact that each of these writers read the same section of Romans, their interpretations differ greatly on various issues, such as the Law, Jewish rejection and Gentile calling. The differences result from the questions and preconceptions they bring to the text. In each case, their particular question or polemic determined their answers and each strives to uphold the primacy of Christianity while denying the importance of Judaism.

The first classical thinker I will examine is Chrysostom. He railed against Judaizing Christians claiming Judaism challenged the supremacy of the new religion. He wrote a number of sermons directed against Judaizing Christians claiming that any Jewish practice or belief was fraudulent because it was not Christianity. Chrysostom argues that free will caused problems for the Jews because they wilfully chose to reject Christ. Chrysostom upheld the

omnipotence of God and considered any Judaizing act as a danger to Christianity.

Augustine's interpretation of Romans 9-11, on the other hand, is the closest to Paul's own. Augustine argues that there is indeed a dimension of "predestination" in Paul. What God essentially foresees, argues Augustine, is those who will have faith in Jesus in the future, and it is upon those that He bestows His grace. This is a testament both to God's power and to the responsibility of the believer. It also leaves room for the non-believers, in this case, the Jews, who will become believers, because this is foreseen by God. Augustine also upholds the place of good works in Christianity. Because God bestows the Holy Spirit upon those who will possess faith, they are moved to perform good works. Thus, unlike Judaism where good works were attributable to human endeavouring, here they are attributable to God. Augustine argues that the primary reason for the failure of the Jews was their determination to attain the grace of God by their own efforts instead of simply accepting it through faith. He also argues that the Jews relied on good deeds to the exclusion of faith but that at the end of time Jesus will come to them and they will be restored.

Martin Luther's interpretation of Romans 9-11 makes the claim that with the death and resurrection of Jesus the Law

was dead. Christ had fulfilled the purpose of the Law, which was to bring God's grace and salvation. The Law was no longer needed to attain salvation and indeed could even prohibit the attainment of salvation if followed. Luther stressed that faith was the basis of election and salvation, and deeds and works based on the Law were now irrelevant. But Luther ignored or misunderstood the place of the Law in Judaism. Faith preceded the Law, as is evident in the passage where Abraham is reckoned righteous before the Law. The giving of the Law was the result of the covenant established between the Jews and God, a response to their gracious election. The Law was not the means to attain salvation but the way in which the Jews gave thanks to God and honored their covenant. Augustine argues that they were rejected by God in order to bring salvation to the Gentiles, and they will be restored at the end of time.

John Calvin, on the other hand, argued that the Jews were rejected by God for their faithlessness in fulfilling their covenant. Calvin, himself, was motivated by predestination. At the point of creation, he argued, God had chosen some to be elected and some to be condemned. It does not matter now if a person upholds the Law or has faith because their future was destined from the beginning of time. Calvin's predestination is rife with problems, especially when applied to Romans 9-11. It challenges free

will and lessens the place of faith in the election and grace of God. Paul stresses that it is necessary to have faith in Jesus as Lord and that faith was the requirement of election. But Calvin sees predestination as the basis of salvation and this results in a skewed understanding of Paul's letter to the Romans. Calvin's argument that the Jews were excluded because the grace of God was ineffectual in some of the descendants of Abraham is however, an interesting one. It, contrary to predestination, places some measure of responsibility in the hands of the followers.

I will now turn to a greater examination of Chrysostom and the way in which his interpretation of Paul and Romans 9-11 were strongly influenced by his hostility toward the Jews and Christian Judaizers.

2.2 John Chrysostom

2.2.1 Chrysostom's Assessment of the Jewish Dilemma

Chrysostom sermonized against Judaizing Christians. His writings demonstrate a shift from Pauline universalism to a strong distrust of anything Jewish. His sermons contain harsh insults against the Jews, attributed to his belief that the Christian church abrogated the Jewish religion. Any adherence to Jewish practice was considered a

challenge to the authority of the "New Church". Chrysostom's homilies on Romans 9-11 delve into his distrust and hostility towards the Jews. His own interpretations are at times at odds with Paul's own words. His preeminent arguments hold that the Jews were entirely to blame for their fall and that it was necessary for the Gentiles to take the Jews' place as the chosen people.

Chrysostom agrees that the Jews once held a "blessed" position: to them was offered the covenant, the prophets and from them came Jesus. But their rejection of Christ meant that they would now be cursed[76]. Chrysostom argues that this disbelief was foretold. He says:

> Why are you surprised... that some of the Jews were saved and some not... in the patriarchs' time, one may see this happening. For why was Isaac only called the seed?[77]

Paul's description of Isaac and Ishmael, according to Chrysostom, demonstrates the salvation of some Jews and the rejection of others, so it should not be a surprise that they are rejected now. Pharaoh provides another example of the rejection of some (Rom 9:23-4). God had long-suffered Pharaoh, who had "kindled the wrath of God"[78] and God had

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[76] John Chrysostom, Homily 16, p. 1; available from http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/210216.htm; Internet: accessed 16 November 2000.

[77] Homily 16, p. 5.

[78] Homily 16, p. 8.

left out "aught of the things likely to recover him"[79]. Pharaoh's fall, unlike that of Ishmael, was attributable to his own culpability. But it does serve to demonstrate that throughout history God has chosen to save some and to reject others.

Underlying Chrysostom's interpretation of Romans 9-11 is his certainty that the Jews were inherently culpable in their own rejection. Despite having received the blessings of the former covenant "they have fallen from all their good things"[80]. Chrysostom displaces the Law and challenges Jewish practice and belief, another suggestion that Judaism was abrogated. Though the Jews "laboured in the practice of the Law and reading the prophets... (the Gentiles) who have come but yesterday from heathen altars and images have been set up above them"[81]. Chrysostom attempts to determine the reason why; not only why the Jews were displaced but also why the Gentiles were now being called.

The Jews, argues Chrysostom, heard the word of God but chose not to believe it. Romans 10:14-17 serves as illustration. This section is organized into an

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[79] Ibid, 8.

[80] Ibid, 2.

[81] Ibid.

objection/question structure[82] offering justifications and rebuttals for the rejection of the Jews. Paul says that the gospel was preached across the lands and was even foretold by Isaiah; therefore, argues Chrysostom, "it was clear that the (Jewish) non-believing was their fault only"[83]. Even upon hearing the gospel, they did not obey it. One justification for this is offered: "if those were (truly) the persons sent upon the mission by God, all ought to have harkened"[84]. But Chrysostom denies this and claims that even their unbelief was foretold. The Jews were seeking signs of the gospel but Chrysostom insists that "the prophet promised no such thing, but that it was by hearing that we were to believe"[85]. Any who were seeking signs would overlook the new righteousness being offered.

The fall of the Jews is based on three points according to Chrysostom. First, they possessed a "zeal of God but not according to knowledge"[86]. Their zeal for following the Law

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[82] John Chrysostom, Homily 18, p. 1; available from http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/210218.htm. Internet: accessed 16 November 2000.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] John Chrysostom, Homily 17, p. 1; available from http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/210217.htm. Internet: accessed 16 November 2000. (Romans 10:2)

ultimately became an obstacle to their attainment of righteousness. By being so focused on the Law they did not focus on faith. This knowledge stipulated that Christ is the end of the Law and that the Law was no longer effective as a tool for salvation[87]. Chrysostom elaborates:

> For if Christ be 'the end of the law' he that hath not Christ, even if he seem to have that righteousness, hath it not. But he that hath Christ, even though he hath not fulfilled the Law aright have received the whole[88].

Here Chrysostom argues that not only did Christ fulfil the Law but that anyone possessing faith in Christ has ultimately fulfilled the Law in their hearts. Thus, they do not need to obey the Law's many commandments. The original purpose of the Law was to make a person righteous but since no one is able to fulfil it completely "it had not the power... this then was the end of the law"[89]. Chrysostom argues that the Law was impossible to follow and this new approach to righteousness offered a way to bypass it.

The second cause of the Jewish fall, according to Chrysostom, was the Jewish ignorance of God's righteousness[90]. God's righteousness comes through faith

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[87] Homily 17, p. 1.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Homily 17, p. 1.

not works. The Jews, says Chrysostom, cannot claim that "we could not draw nigh, since we had a display of works demanded of us and laborious well-doings"[91], because with Jesus the Law is now ineffective. It is now by grace alone that one is saved. Chrysostom anticipates and overrules this objection:

> And if by grace, it will be said, how come we all not to be saved?... Because ye (the Jews) would not. For grace, though it be grace, saves the willing, not those who will not have it[92].

By faith in Christ, a person has fulfilled every required work of the Law, since, Chrysostom argues, the Law was intended to lead to Christ.

The third underlying factor in Jewish rejection is connected to the second. The Jews, argues Chrysostom, have "not submitted themselves into the righteousness of God"[93]. Instead of relying on the faith and grace of God the Jews have attempted to attain their own righteousness. The Jews have continued to stress the importance of the Law instead of turning to faith in Jesus. But insists Chrysostom, it is "entirely from the grace from above, and because men are justified in this case, not by labours, but by the gift of

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[91] Ibid, 5.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid, 1.

God"[94]. The Jews, he concludes, have "vexatiously tried to be justified by the Law (and thus) came not over to the faith"[95].

Chrysostom stresses the difference between righteousness by faith and righteousness by works and he claims that this defines the fundamental difference between Jews and Christians. He argues:

> I, however, have a good reason to give you why the Gentiles were justified and ye were cast out... It is that they are of faith, ye of works of the Law[96].

Chrysostom argues that the Jews have not even "found the righteousness which was by the Law. For (they have) transgressed it, and become liable to the curse"[97]. This, he claims, was the cause of their destruction. Chrysostom argues that with the appearance of Jesus the righteousness of God is cut short. Since Christ is the end of the Law, faith is easier than Law: "For that requires the fulfilment of all things... but the righteousness which is of faith doth not say this"[98]. This, he says, is the reason that the Gentiles are now elected; they adhered to faith instead of

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[94] Homily 17, p. 1.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Homily 16, p.6.

[97] Ibid., 10.

[98] Homily 17, p. 2.

works.

Chrysostom upholds the notions of replacement and abrogation. The paradox of the Gentiles replacing the Jews is evident in Paul. The Gentiles attained righteousness without trying but Israel did not, despite their efforts[99]. This action demonstrated God's power by "lifting those of the Gentiles who believed, above the heaven, but bringing down such of the Jews as believed not, to the lowest estate of desolation"[100]. Gentile election had no basis in merit or deed, but rather in faith. Chrysostom insists that:

> even if [the Jews] had fallen a thousand times, the Gentiles would not have been saved unless they had shown faith... As the Jews likewise would not have perished unless they had been unbelieving[101].

But since the offer of God's grace is universal, it is still equally available to the Jews as it is to Christians. But it is no longer offered through the Law, but rather by faith.

The purpose of the Gentile election, according to Chrysostom, was to provoke Jewish jealousy. Chrysostom says that the Jews should view the "very fact of their seeing their inferiors, those of the Gentiles, in greater honour,

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[99] Homily 16, p. 10.

[100] John Chrysostom, Homily 19, p. 2; available from http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/210219.htm. Internet: accessed 16 November 2000.

[101] Homily 19, p. 3.

as galling... and lead them to jealousy"[102]. Had everything worked out according to the natural order of things, the Jews should have been "first to come in, and then... the Gentiles; but since they disbelieved the order was reversed"[103]. Chrysostom argues that Paul's olive tree analogy (Rom 11:16) represents both the Jewish rejection and the intention to provoke jealousy. This metaphor illustrates that the "Jews are devoid of all excuse, even from the 'root', from the 'first fruit': for consider the badness of the branches, which, when they have a sweet root, still do not imitate it"[104]. If the root is holy and the branches are not, then they must be distant from one another. Paul hopes, Chrysostom argues, that the Gentile election will move the Jews first to jealousy and then to faith[105]. The natural branches have been cut and wild branches grafted in, but the expectation is that the natural branches will be grafted in again.

Despite the Jewish Fall, the promises are upheld, claims Chrysostom. Paul, an Israelite, was not cast off and a remnant of believers was saved. However, the remainder of

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[102] Homily 18, p. 2.

[103] Homily 19, pp. 2-3.

[104] Ibid., 4.

[105] Ibid.

the Jews are in a 'spirit of slumber', defined by Chrysostom as a "habit of soul inclinable to the worse, when incurably and unchangeably so"[106]. The Jewish reliance on the Law has ensnared them[107] and their eyes have been darkened (Rom 11:10). However, according to Paul, the Jews have not stumbled permanently (Rom 11:11). Chrysostom perceives this as an "allayment" for the Jews which Paul introduced[108]. This allayment stipulates that "'when the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, then shall all Israel be saved' at the time of his second coming at the end of the world"[109].

2.2.2. Chrysostom Versus the Judaizers: The Beginnings of the Anti-Jewish Sentiment

Underlying the hostility of Chrysostom's homilies and sermons was the fear that "the attractiveness" of Judaism would divert believers from a Christian life. As is evident in his analysis of Romans 9-11, Chrysostom believed that Christianity abrogated Judaism and the covenant of Israel. But he saw the continued existence of Judaism as a threat to Christianity. As a result, his sermons became more openly

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[106] Homily 19, p. 1.

[107] Homily 19, p. 1; Romans 11:9.

[108] Ibid., 2.

[109] Ibid.

hostile toward Jews.

Robert Wilkin argues that Chrysostom's sermons were "preached against... Judaizers, not against Jews"[110], but Chrysostom's own words contradict this. He criticised Judaizing Christians claiming that they wanted "to have fellowship with the Jews and 'fellowship at the holy table sharing the precious blood'"[111]. He wanted them to know that they could not have both. Throughout his sermons, he consistently places faith over against works. Humanity is now justified by faith alone and "the justice of God has been made manifest independently of the Law"[112]. He argues that the Law has nothing "to do with this new manifestation of God's justice... the Christian dispensation of salvation is independent and destined to supersede the Law"[113]. The advent of Christ meant that the reign of the Law was complete. God's righteousness was now obtainable through faith in Jesus.

As a result of his fear, some of Chrysostom's harshest

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[110] Robert Wilkin, John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983),69.

[111] Wilkin, 76.

[112] Paul Harkins (tr), Saint John Chrysostom: Discourses against Judaizing Christians (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1979), (Discourse VII, Section III, Point 1), p. 186.

[113] Harkins, 186 (Note 37).

remarks are reserved for the Jews. He rails against the Judaizers and warns them that:

> when you stand indicted before God's tribunal, what reason will you be able to give for considering the Jew's witchcraft moreworthy of your belief than what Christ has said[114].

He calls the Jews "pitiable and miserable. When so many blessings from heaven came into their hands, they thrust them aside"[115]. He further claims that the "Old Covenant (is) abrogated rather than fulfilled. The Jews rejected God's blessing and now God has rejected Israel"[116]. Again he points out their culpability:

> Nothing is more miserable than those people who never failed to attack their own salvation. When there was a need to observe the Law they trampled it underfoot... What could be more pitiable than those who provoke God not only by transgressing the Law but also by keeping it[117].

His harshest criticism is levelled at the Jews because of Christ:

> The difference between the Jews and [Christians] is not a small one, is it? Is the dispute between [them] over ordinary, everyday matters, so that you think the two religions are really one and the same?...They crucified the Christ whom you

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[114] Harkins, (Discourse VIII, Section VIII, Point 5), 236.

[115] Ibid., (Discourse I, Section II, Point 1), 5.

[116] Ibid., (Discourse I, Section II, Point 5), 99.

[117] Ibid., (Discourse I, Section II, Point 3), 6.

[Christians] adore as God[118].

It is evident that he was as harsh and hostile toward the Jews as he was to Judaizing Christians. His statements against the Law and Judaism lend further credence to his argument that the Jews must eventually convert to Christianity in order to attain salvation. This hostility toward Judaizers and ultimately toward the Jews, influenced his interpretations. It caused him to denigrate Judaism and even to displace it entirely as a religion since he believed it had been superseded by Christianity.

2.3 Augustine of Hippo

The second classical interpreter which I will examine is Augustine. Augustine's emphasis on Original Sin permeates every aspect of his interpretation of Paul and Romans. It is his belief that humanity is under the realm of sin because of the sin of the first man and woman. As a result, humans are unable, by their own effort to escape this realm of sin. With the appearance of Jesus as Messiah, Augustine argues that confessing a belief in Jesus will bring about the desired result, namely removing oneself from sin.

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[118] Harkins, {Discourse IV, Section 3, Point 6}, 78.

2.3.1 Augustine and Original Sin

The primary factor underlying Augustine's interpretation of Romans 9-11 is his conviction that all humanity exists in a state of Original Sin. Before humanity succumbed to Original Sin through the fall of Adam:

> (t)he state in which He did create man was superior to his present condition; before he sinned man led a life whose very existence was his peaceful love of God... he committed no sin,he was not subject to any evil, pain or sorrow: hence he was incorruptible and immortal[119].

Humanity was free from evil and subject only to the grace of God. Augustine says that "Adam possessed a grace such as we have to free us from evil. Without any inner struggle, without temptation from within, and without trouble, he lived peacefully in his abode of happiness"[120]. However, this state of grace did not endure. Humanity turned away from God, a "failure on the part of (his) free choice"[121]. Augustine attributes the source of this evil to "man's will alone, and especially (to) his pride"[122]. It was a desire "to raise himself to a dignity not his own... (a) conceit

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[119] Etienne Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine (New York: Random House, 1960), 149,(*De Civitate Dei XIV, 10*).

[120] Ibid., (*De Corr. et Gratia II, 29*), 150.

[121] Ibid., 150.

[122] Ibid.,(*De Civitate Dei XIX, 13, 1*).

which led him to abandon the principle which he should have clung"[123]. This is the same error that Augustine later attributes to the Jews.

According to Augustine, Original Sin is entirely attributable to one's own free will. It "was through free choice that (one) abandoned God (and thus) he was visited with God's just judgement"[124]. As a result of Adam's transgression there exists "our present ignorance from which we are trying laboriously to emerge... the body's revolt against the soul"[125]. This state governs all humanity. All are subject to Original Sin and yet there is hope. According to Augustine:

> we must not think that the original nature willed by God was completely destroyed by Adam's sin. That nature was a gift of God; hence if God took away all He gave it, it would cease entirely to exist[126].

Humanity was thrust into a state of sin by its own actions, but being human, it is unable to destroy that which was created by God. For this reason, some part of humanity's original nature continues to exist.

Augustine argues that the unbelieving Jews are still

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[123] Ibid.

[124] Gilson, (*De Corr. et Gratia 10, 28*), 151.

[125] Ibid., (*De Civitate Dei XIX, 13, 2*).

[126] Ibid., (*De Civitate Dei, XIX, 13, 2*).

subject to this Original Sin because of their continued reliance on the Law. Before Christ they were justified in doing so: the Law was to serve as a guide until it was fulfilled by the appearance of Jesus. However, the Jewish reliance on the Law lead to difficulties. Augustine says: "Blind to the good as a result of Adam's sin, and not yet warned by the Law, they followed after evil without knowing it"[127]. But the Law was not needed to introduce sin, argues Augustine, because sin already existed. The Law does not remove sin because only God's grace is capable of that[128]. The Law was intended "to point (sin) out and at least to give man both a sense of his sin and an appreciation of his need for grace"[129]. But still to live under the reign of Law and to deny the gift of God's grace through Jesus, Augustine argues, means that one lives as a slave: "he realizes he is dominated by it and he knows it is forbidden; he even knows it is justly forbidden, and yet he gives into it"[130]. This is the present state of the Jews as Augustine sees it.

The sole manner in which one removes oneself from the reign of sin is by the grace of God. But grace is a gift.

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[127] Gilson, (*De Div. Quaest. ad Simpl., 1,1,4*), 153.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., (*De Div. Quaest. ad Simpl., I, 1, 7-14*), 154.

It cannot be earned by works or merit. Augustine says "If it were possible to merit grace, it would not be gratuitous"[131]. Faith, then, is connected to grace and yet grace precedes faith. "Faith comes before works, not because it dispenses with them... but rather because they flow from it"[132]. It is important to realize that one "cannot perform good works unless he has received both faith and grace"[133]. It is with these ideas and convictions that Augustine embarks upon his commentary of Romans 9-11.

2.3.2 The Election of the Faithful: Jews and Gentiles

Augustine questioned the manner of salvation: the way in which some were elected and some were not. God, he argues, elects by his foreknowledge, "by which he knows the character even of the unborn"[134]. This is not a foreknowledge of future good works or merit, however. Augustine uses Paul's example of Romans 9:11-13 to illustrate his point:

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[131] Gilson,(*De Div. Quaest. ad Simpl., I, 2, 2*), 154.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Augustine of Hippo, Augustine on Romans: Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans, Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (California: Scholar's Press, 1982), 31.

> though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call... 'The elder will serve the younger'. As it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated' (Rom 9:11-13).

One of the brothers had been elected by God without any basis in works or character, but based entirely on the grace and free choice of God. Augustine argues that "God loved the one and hated the other before either was born and could not have done (anything to merit it)"[135]. They had not yet existed in order to perform good deeds and thus their election and rejection was not based on merit. Despite God's foreknowledge of their character, God did not elect or reject them because of it. Even had they done good works, it would have achieved nothing. Augustine argues that since good works are a result of grace, then any good deeds performed are entirely attributable to God, and not to Jacob or Esau[136]. God's election rests rather on faith, "so that He chooses precisely him whom he foreknew would believe in Him"[137]. This places election entirely in the hands of God. One has faith because they were given grace and one does good deeds as a response to it. But it all begins with the offer of God's grace.

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[135] Augustine, Commentary 31.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid., 33.

Augustine continues to strive for an explanation as to why one is given grace and one is not. He says that the reason God loved Jacob and hated Esau was so that "Jacob would realize that he was from the lump of original iniquity when he saw that his brother, with whom he had a common origin, in justice deserved to be condemned and that he could not be distinguished by grace"[138]. The purpose was to demonstrate that one brother is separated from the other solely by grace. It is to illustrate that one's election rests entirely on the grace of God and removes any effectiveness on the part of human endeavouring.

Augustine uses Paul's example of Pharaoh to illustrate both the foreknowledge of God and election by grace. This passage can be interpreted to mean the actions of Pharaoh serve to demonstrate God's own great power. But Augustine argues that "Pharaoh's disobedience to God's commands came as a punishment"[139]. God did not cause Pharaoh to be disobedient by hardening his heart or blinding him, but rather that Pharaoh "had merited his hardness of heart by

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[138] David Hurst (tr), Bede the Venerable: Excerpts from the Works of Saint Augustine on the letters of the Blessed Apostle Paul (Michigan: Cistercian Publishing, 1999),(*Letter to Sixtus concerning Pelagians, 194.8, 38-9*), 84.

[139] Augustine, Commentary 35.

his prior infidelity"[140]. God foresaw that Pharaoh would not have had faith in Him and thus did not offer His grace. In other words, if one's future faith is foreknown by God, then one will automatically receive grace.

The problem with this interpretation, as Augustine's realizes, is its inherent challenge to free will. If a person is offered the grace of God because it is foreknown that they will have faith, then they are moved to do good works as a result. But if they are foreknown to not have faith, grace is then withheld. As a result, they are not moved to do good. There is no possibility of moving from a lower status to a higher because grace is absent. Augustine struggles with this problem:

> If God creates circumstances in which He foresees our free choice will decide in one way rather than another, He infallibly gets from us the free acts His justice and wisdom seek to obtain from our free will without changing the will at all... As for other souls, He could call them in the same way, but He does not do so, and this is why few are chosen, though many are called[141].

This interpretation raises some questions. If God creates favourable circumstances in order for those with grace to choose rightly, is it still actually free will? If God can manipulate circumstances for the elect to choose rightly,

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[140] Ibid.

[141] Gilson, (*De Div. Quaest. ad Simpl., I, 2, 14*), 155.

why not for all? The question at hand is whether or not God is just.

Augustine, like Paul, argues that God is merciful and just. Paul asks, "Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion' (Rom 9:14-15)". Augustine asserts that "God was merciful to us the first time when he called us while we were still sinners... he will make the believer compassionate, so that he can do good works through love"[142]. All of humanity exists in the same state of sin and it is only by grace that one is freed from it. But this election by grace is based entirely on future faith. Augustine says:

> God in his foreknowledge elects those who will believe and condemns the unbelieving... granting to the faith of the one group the ability to do good works, and hardening the impiety of the other by deserting them, so that they do evil[143].

But what does this mean for the election of the Jews and Gentiles?

In Romans 9:4-5, Paul lists the blessings of the Jews: "to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises". They

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[142] Augustine, Commentary 33.

[143] Ibid., 33.

were the chosen people of God. But with the appearance of Jesus, Augustine argues, God offered a new, shortened means of salvation, but not everyone accepted it. Paul struggles with the reason why so many of his fellow Jews did not believe. This is also the question that Augustine strives to answer. He challenges the preeminence of the Jewish election:

> if we are called to belief not through our own works but by the mercy of God, so that we who believe do good, then they ought not begrudge the Gentiles this mercy as though it had been given to the Jews on account of previous merit, which is nothing[144].

This new method of salvation is now not only universally offered but shortened and easier. Augustine says that God "will save believers by grace, using the short way of faith, and not by the innumerable observances by which the vast number [of Jews] was burdened and oppressed"[145]. The Gentiles attained this new righteousness "on the basis of faith, but Israel did not obtain it because [they sought it] not on the basis of faith but as if it were based on works"[146]. Augustine argues that the Jews attempted to attain righteousness by works in adhering to a Law that had

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[144] Ibid., 37.

[145] Hurst, (*To Simplicion, Bishop, 1.2.19*), 88.

[146] Hurst, (*Ag. Julian 1.141*), 89.

been fulfilled by Christ. It was now necessary to turn to faith instead of the Law.

Augustine looks to Romans 9:6-7 for the reason the Jews did not accept this new righteousness. Paul says "For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his descendants". This, according to Augustine, means that "it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants"[147]. Augustine argues that Paul connects the children of the flesh to the Law and the old covenant and the children of the promise to Christ and the new covenant[148]. In order to be one of the children of the promise, one needed to possess both faith and grace to be free from the reign of the Law. He says:

> Those who would understand that they are the children of the promise, not being proud because of their own merits, but attributing to the grace of the call that they were to be joint heirs with Christ[149].

This is a separation within Israel of those who cling to the old righteousness and those who accept God's grace in Christ and thus the new righteousness.

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[147] Hurst, (*On the City of God 22.16*), 81.

[148] Ibid., (*On the Actions of Pelagius 5. 14*), 82.

[149] Ibid., (*To Simplicion, Bishop 1.2.3*), 83.

In his interpretation of Romans 9-11, Augustine examines the present state of the Jews. He, like Paul, posits that Israel has not sinned so as to fall permanently[150], and that a remnant has been saved. In Romans 9:27 Paul refers to Isaiah's prophecy of a remnant[151] and in Romans 10:1 he expresses hope that they will be saved. But according to Augustine, the Jews must accept the new righteousness offered by God, a "shortened" righteousness rooted in the gospel. He says:

> For the innumerable and multitudinous rites which had oppressed the Jewish people have been removed, so that through the mercy of God by the brevity of the confession of faith we might attain salvation[152].

But the majority of the Jews did not accept this. Augustine agrees with Paul that the Jews are now blinded, although they are themselves responsible for this:

> [The Jews] could not believe because the prophet Isaiah foretold it... because God knew beforehand that this would come about. If I am asked why they would not, I immediately answer that they were unwilling. God foresaw their ill will[153].

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[150] "So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous" Romans 11:11-12.

[151] "And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: 'Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved" Romans 9:27; Is 10:22-23.

[152] Augustine, Commentary 39.

[153] Hurst, (*Homily 50 on the Gospel of John 53.5-6*), 93.

As a result of their ill will they are hardened until they are willing to accept the grace of God.

Like Chrysostom, Augustine agrees that the Jews were rejected. First, as a result of their own culpability, they rejected Jesus as Lord: "The Jewish people were expecting that Christ would come, but because he came in a lowly state they did not recognize him. Because the stone was small they stumbled over him and were broken"[154]. Again, like Chrysostom, Augustine accuses the Jews of attempting to attain a righteousness of their own instead of accepting that of God: "Being ignorant of God's righteousness... and wanting to establish their own- as if accomplished by the strength of their own wills- they have not submitted to God's righteousness"[155].

The rejection of the Jews, according to Augustine, resulted in two consequences for the Gentiles. The new universalism of the gospel now extended to Gentiles as well as Jews. Second, and in agreement with Paul, the Gentile acceptance of the Gospel would provoke the Jews to such jealousy so as to return them to God. The first consequence challenges the sole election of the Jews as a 'chosen people'. Augustine says:

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[154] Hurst, (*Homily 3 on the Gospel of John 3.6*), 89.

[155] Ibid., (*To Hilary 157.1.2.6*), 90.

> The teacher of the Gentiles wanted to refute those who supposed that the gospel was to be preached solely to the nation of the Jews and not also to uncircumcised nations[156].

The salvation offered through this new shortened righteousness was now offered to everyone, "Jew and Greek alike"(Rom 10:12). Paul "want(ed) to show that it belonged not to the Jews only, but to all nations"[157]. But he leaves room in his olive tree analogy for the return of the Jews, the 'natural branches'.

Augustine argues that Paul hoped that the Gentile faith "will anger the Jews because they have accepted what the Jews rejected"[158]. Augustine agrees with Paul when he argues that the Gentiles have their own circumcision: "if the uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the Law, will he not be regarded as circumcised?"[159].

The ultimate fate of the Jews in Augustine's interpretation of Romans 9-11 is their future salvation. He argues that Romans 11:29[160] is proof that the Jewish

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[156] Hurst, (*Against the Opponent of the Law and the Prophets 2.2.11*), 92.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Augustine, Commentary 39.

[159] Ibid.; Romans 2:26.

[160] "For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable". Romans 11:29.

rejection is temporary and that the Jews will eventually be saved[161]. They have only fallen for a time "as a punishment... so that this fall itself would be profitable to the Gentiles for salvation"[162]. But Augustine does not elaborate on whether or not their future salvation will require conversion to Christianity.

2.4 Martin Luther

The third classical exegete I have decided to examine is Martin Luther. Luther's influence in the history of the Protestant church is well-known. Unfortunately, he applied his struggle with the introspective conscience to the words of Paul, in essence, lending to Paul a quality which his words did not originally possess. His struggle to comprehend how the human condition, so much under the realm of sin and thus unworthy of God, could possibly lead to any kind of salvation. His solution was that since humans are hopelessly under the influence of sin, grace and salvation must be left entirely up to God. As a result, Luther disregarded the Jewish religion and its emphasis on works and deeds.

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[161] Hurst, (*To Prosper and Hilary 16.33*), 95.

[162] Augustine Commentary 41.

For Martin Luther the applicability of the Law ended with the appearance of Jesus. This polemic had its foundation in three factors. The first is Luther's negative attitude toward the Jews in his own time. This hostility precluded any hope of Jewish- Christian reconciliation. The second factor is his belief that humanity is entirely enslaved to sin and is unable to attain righteousness on its own. This, of course, leads to a salvation that is based solely on God and His grace. The third factor is Luther's conviction that the Law and, as a result, Judaism, is superseded by Christianity and the gospel of Jesus.

2.4.1 Luther's Attitude toward the Jews

In the sixteenth century, the Jews faced much hostility. In fact "expulsion of Jews was common practice"[163]. The conflict between the Jews and Christians was:

> exclusively religious. As soon as a Jew became a Christian prejudices... collapsed... Jews were rejected because they were 'murderers of God' and because of their loyalty to the Jewish Law, which Christendom since Paul was convinced had come to its end through Jesus[164].

Luther criticised Jewish 'legalism' and what he understood

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[163] Bernhard Lohse, Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 336.

[164] Ibid., 338.

to be their religion of works-righteousness. Luther was convinced that the Jews had not accepted the Gospel because the "true gospel had not been preached to the Jews" and "that if the rediscovered gospel were heard now, wherever possible it would finally reach them"[165]. Once they heard it, Luther maintained that they would convert to Christianity and be saved. This, of course, challenges the importance of Judaism as a valid religion in its own right.

Luther tried to improve the relationship between Jews and Christians, at first. His tract "That Jesus was born a Jew,"[166] was an attempt "to set the current debate with the Jews on a new and better footing... (it was) primarily a defence directed at traditionalists"[167]. His Letter to Josel (1537) claimed that he "always advocated friendly treatment of the Jews," and yet even this friendship was tempered by the conviction that they would eventually accept Jesus as Lord. Luther still maintained his conviction that the Jews must eventually convert to Christianity.

But Luther came to believe that the Jews were exploiting his gesture of goodwill, resulting in his 1543

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[165] Lohse, 339.

[166] Martin Luther, Luther's Works v.45, 199-299.

[167] Lohse, 340.

tract "On the Jews and their Lies"[168]. In it, he pointed to their boasting and their pride[169]. He challenged their election by God and the importance of circumcision because they had persecuted the prophets[170]. Luther even accused the rabbis of distorting the truth of the Christian gospel and the Messiahship of Jesus. Luther claimed that his interpretation of scripture would present "the objective... Christian interpretation of the Old Testament in view of Christ against Jewish exposition of Old Testament Messianic prophecies"[171]. Luther ultimately condemned Judaism and Jewish practice. He proposed that they burn Jewish synagogues because they practised idolatry, destroy Jewish houses for the same reason, forbid the teachings of the Rabbis and force the Jews into manual labour[172]. Luther was convinced that the Jewish religion was superseded by Christianity and the gospel and he could not comprehend the Jewish refusal to accept this as the means of salvation. His struggle to convince them became hostile.

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[168] Martin Luther, Luther's Works v.47, 139.

[169] Lohse, 242.

[170] Ibid., 343.

[171] Ibid., 344.

[172] Ibid., 344.

2.4.2 State of the Human Condition

Luther wrestled with his belief that humanity could never, on its own, attain righteousness or salvation. Humanity was subject to Original Sin and was unable to free itself. Paul's understanding of Original Sin, "the absence of a quality of will... a total lack of uprightness and the power of all the faculties... the inclination to evil" (Rom 5:14), influenced Luther's own. Luther argued that "persons not only commit sins but are themselves sinners", in other words, it is a state of being[173]. It is possible here to see an Augustinian influence. Like Augustine, Luther maintained:

> The entire human race in its apostate root was condemned with a divine justice which was so just that even if not a single personwere delivered from it, no man could rightly curse the righteousness of God[174].

It is impossible for humankind to overcome its sinful state and yet God is just in making it so. Again, the ability to move from a state of sin rests in the hands of God.

The nature of sin, according to Luther, is 'pride' or 'self-will'. Humankind inherited this from the sin of Adam and this sin continually leads to more sins[175]. Luther says

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[173] Lohse, 71.

[174] Martin Luther, Luther's Works (v.25): Lectures on Romans ed. O. Hilton; (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), 394.

[175] Lohse, 250.

that "Sin, in the scripture, means not only the outward works of the body but also all the activities that move men to do these works"[176]. Luther argued that before the Fall, Adam was "righteous, pious and holy"[177]. Adam and Eve possessed an "inherited righteousness, but as soon as they ate from the forbidden tree and sinned... this hereditary righteousness failed and was ruined. Then evil desires began to be raised and grow in them"[178]. This is the state in which all humanity exists. Until the gospel, argues Luther, there was no method of freeing oneself. But if a sinner does not accept God's grace, he commits a more serious sin: "This sin is the desire to set oneself in place of God, not allowing God to be one's God"[179]. This is the fault which Luther attributes to the Jews, with their emphasis on Law and good works. But, he argues, only the grace of God can enable humanity to overcome its human condition.

Luther concludes that the only way to free oneself from a state of perdition is by grace. This grace is offered

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[176] Martin Luther, Luther's Works (v.35) Word and Sacrament ed. Bachmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 369.

[177] Lohse, 251; LW v.52, 166-7.

[178] Ibid., 252.

[179] Ibid., 250.

universally through the gospel and Luther accuses the Jews of presumptuousness. He says that "the Jews want to be considered the children of the kingdom because they are the children of Abraham. Against them the Apostle argues"[180]. If this were true then even Ishmael and Esau would be heirs to the promise but in Romans 9:8, Paul separates the children of the promise from the children of the flesh in order to demonstrate that only some receive grace.

Paul uses Jacob and Esau to illustrate this. These are two brothers, "neither of whom as yet is either good or bad; and yet without any deserving the one is called to be a son and the other to be a servant"[181]. Both were descendants of Abraham and yet only one was chosen. Luther concludes that "it inexorably follows that flesh does not make sons of God and the heirs of the promise, but only the gracious election of God"[182]. The choice was based entirely on the grace of God and not on works and merit. For Luther, Paul's example of Pharaoh (9:17) illustrates a person who is not elected to receive grace. Luther argues that for Paul, everything is based on God's election, which is in turn the result of

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[180] Luther, Lectures, 384.

[181] Ibid., 388.

[182] Ibid., 385.

God's pleasure[183]. Since everyone exists in a state of sin "no one is righteous before God unless he receives mercy"[184]. When God raised Pharaoh up, it was in order to demonstrate His own power and to illustrate one who is not elected to receive grace.

Luther argues that God's election rests on His foreknowledge and that this foreknowledge is based on God's pleasure. Luther says "God foreknows nothing contingently but that he foresees and purposes and does all things by his immutably, eternal and infallible will"[185]. Thus every human act is connected to the will of God. Every human action is a result of the presence of grace or the lack of it. Our salvation rests on our faith and is "taken entirely out of our hands and put in the hand of God alone"[186]. This salvation has one requirement: faith.

Luther argues that when Jacob was chosen and Esau rejected (9:13), works and merit were excluded as a means to grace. Good works, instead, are entirely attributable to

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[183] Ibid., 391.

[184] Ibid., 391.

[185] E. Gordon Rupp, "God's Foreknowledge, Contingence and Necessity" Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation (London: SCM Press,1969), 118.

[186] Martin Luther, "Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans" 1546 (1522) Luther's Works (v. 35): Word and Sacrament ed. Bachmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 378.

God's will and grace, not our own:

> For they are good... but only because they have been chosen by God from eternity that they please Him. Therefore we do good works only in giving thanks[187].

Even our own willing will not garner grace. Paul says that God "will have mercy on whom (He has) mercy" (Rom 9:15), removing any aspect of our own will. According to Luther, Paul is "rebuffing those who are anxious and curious about the predestination of themselves or of others"[188]. Human actions have no effect on God's bestowal of His grace. Luther argues that:

> the fact that a man does will or exert himself is not of his own power but of the mercy of God, who has given this power of willing or doing, without which man of himself can neither will nor make exertion[189].

He insists that human willing and actions are not only incapable of earning God's grace, but that they do not even originate with humanity, but rather with God.

Hence, the connection between faith and grace is made evident. The only method of attaining the grace of God is the possession of faith. Luther defines faith as:

> a matter of the heart. It concerns chiefly one's relation to God under the perspective of judgement and grace... Faith is directed to the Word of God,

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[187] Luther, Lectures, 385.

[188] Luther, Lectures, 387.

[189] Ibid., 388.

> in fact, is itself worked by God... and is ultimately not a human work[190].

Without faith, one cannot be righteous. But this does not mean that faith replaces works as a requirement because then "faith would then be construed as a 'work' needing to be performed on one's own in order to receive God's grace"[191]. Faith, argues Luther, is not an action but a conviction that only God can save. Faith is the result of God's grace and good works a response.

One is justified, according to Luther, by possessing both faith and grace. It is important to understand, Luther argues, that works-righteousness could never earn the grace of God. Though good works are not required for grace, they illustrate the possession of faith. Luther claims that "if good works do not follow, it is certain that this faith in Christ does not dwell in our heart, but... dead faith"[192]. Since "true faith is not idle"[193], those works which will "be of significance at the last judgement are interpreted as signs of faith or unbelief (and yet) faith's preeminence is

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[190] Lohse, 201.

[191] Ibid., 261.

[192] Martin Luther, "Thesis Concerning Faith and Law" (1535) Luther's Works (v.34), III.

[193] Martin Luther, "Dispensation Concerning Justification (1536)" Luther's Works (v.34), 183.

preserved"[194]. It is only the choices that one makes and the actions undertaken, *after* the reception of grace, which will be considered in the end.

2.4.3 Death to the Law

With the development of this new righteousness, the Law is no longer effective and Luther equated the Law with sin. He says that "the Law shows up sin and makes man guilty and sick; indeed proves him worthy of being damned"[195]. Influenced by Paul's words[196], Luther argues that the Law leads to the knowledge of sin and in fact increases it. The purpose of the Law, according to Luther, was "to make sin known so that when its gravity and magnitude are recognized, man in his pride... may be humbled"[197]. This function of the Law is theological. The Law was given to convict humanity of its sins but it cannot enable them to attain righteousness. It can only illustrate the hopelessness of the human condition without the grace of God. The Law has now been superseded by the gospel and the Law and gospel are

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[194] Lohse, 41.

[195] Luther, Lectures, 417.

[196] "Law came in, to increase the trespass" (Romans 5:20).

[197] Rupp, Luther and Erasmus ,306.

now set up in dialectical opposition.

Luther began his lecture on Romans with the words: "the chief purpose of this letter is to break down... all wisdom and righteousness of the flesh"[198], and in Romans 9:28 Paul claims that God has cut short his word[199]. Luther explains that this refers to "the Spirit and to the letter, that is, that the flesh and the wisdom of the flesh are in no way capable of comprehending the righteousness and wisdom of God"[200]. He associates the Law with the righteousness of the flesh and the gospel with the righteousness of the Spirit. The Law was the "long way to righteousness with its innumerable laws and rituals. (Before the gospel) everything was in shadow and figure because of the slowness of the Jews; the Word was unfinished and incomplete and therefore easily understood by all"[201]. But the gospel is complete and separate from signs and figures. Therefore any "who adhered to those signs and symbols were cut off, or rather the Word was cut off from all of them"[202]. It is no longer necessary

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[198] Martin Luther, Luther's Works (v.25) 135; Bernhard, 68.

[199] "For the Lord will execute his sentence upon the earth with rigor and dispatch" Romans 9:28.

[200] Luther, Lectures 396.

[201] Ibid.

[202] Ibid., 396.

to approach God through rituals and numerous laws. Again, the only required response is faith.

The Law was imperfect because it "signified but did not demonstrate that which it signified"[203]. In other words, it promised salvation yet made it impossible to attain. Luther insists, that "For this reason it was extended and prolonged, because it led more and more to the imperfect"[204]. On the other hand, the gospel was finished "because it bestows what it signifies, namely grace"[205]. The gospel is precisely this, says Luther: "Christ died and is risen again"[206]. It is because of this that "unbelievers are contentious and are always stumbling at the Word of faith. For where they ought to believe they want to have it demonstrated to them"[207]. But God's righteousness is revealed only in the gospel; "In human teaching the righteousness of man is revealed and taught, that is, who is and becomes righteous before himself... only in the gospel is the righteousness of God revealed...by faith alone"[208]. In this

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[203] Ibid., 398.

[204] Ibid., 398.

[205] Luther, Lectures,398.

[206] Ibid., 398.

[207] Ibid., 407.

[208] Lohse, 74.

manner, the gospel of God becomes universal. It no longer requires the fulfilment of Jewish practices or laws. Since faith is the result of God's grace and the result of this is good works, nothing more is necessary.

2.4.4 Luther's Answer to the Jewish Question in Light of Romans 9-11

Luther's assessment of the present state of the Jews is similar to that of Augustine and Chrysostom. Unfortunately, his hostility toward the Jews had a negative influence on his interpretation. In the present, the Jews possess a spirit of stupor (Romans 11:18) and this stupor makes "a man to be pleased with himself and displeased with everything else"[209]. Their reliance on the Law has created a snare, which Luther defines as:

> divine scripture itself when it is understood and taught in a deceitful way, so that under the appearance of pious learning the souls are deceived... are subtly ensnared[210].

Once ensnared they become caught in a pitfall (Rom 11:9), and "continue to stumble without ceasing for they are trapped in those things which they understood falsely"[211].

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[209] Luther, Lectures,424.

[210] Ibid., 424.

[211] Ibid., 425.

Being so ensnared, he argues, they do not see that God has offered a new means of righteousness.

But as a result of their fall, Luther argues, salvation is now offered to the Gentiles "in order that their fall might not entirely be barren of fruit and an evil thing without any good"[212]. The Gentiles were not the 'chosen people' of God and yet they were called. Paul recalls the words of Moses in Romans 10:19[213] predicting the call of a 'foolish nation'. The purpose of saving a people with no merit or works to their credit was to demonstrate the grace and power of God. But it had an undesired effect: "the proud who trust in their own merits and wisdom become very angry... because to others is given free when they are undeserving what they themselves sought with great zeal"[214]. The hope is that the Jews who had fallen might be moved to acceptance by the Gentile election. Luther argues that this might:

> provoke the Jews when they would see that they themselves had fallen and that they had been deprived of that grace by which the Gentiles were now adorned[215].

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[212] Ibid., 426.

[213] "First Moses says 'I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry" Romans 10:19; Deut 32:21.

[214] Luther, Lectures,419.

[215] Ibid., 426.

Luther argues that it is "commonly accepted that the Jews at the end of the world will return to the faith"[216] and he echoes Paul's words about the mystery of God: "I want you to understand why the Jews fell; a secret which no man knows, namely that the Jews who are now fallen shall return and be saved after the Gentiles[217]. He ultimately concludes, as Paul says in Romans 11:29[218], that:

> the counsel of God is not changed by either the merits or demerits of anyone. For He does not repent of the gifts and calling which He has promised because the Jews are now unworthy of them[219].

However, Luther ultimately believes that the Jews must eventually convert to Christianity in order to be saved.

2.5 John Calvin and Predestination

John Calvin, on the other hand, applied the concept of predestination to Paul and specifically Romans. It was his belief, like Luther, that humanity was helpless in the face of sin, but he went further. It was his argument that no matter what one confesses, believes or does, God has already predestined those who will receive grace and those who will

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[216] Ibid., 429.

[217] Luther, Lectures, 430.

[218] "For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29).

[219] Luther, Lectures, 432.

not. He also connects this bestowal of grace with the present belief in Jesus as Messiah in order to argue that those with such belief must have been predestined to believe from the start. As a result, according to Luther, the Jews who do not accept Jesus as Messiah are outside the realm of salvation and grace, and thus must not have received God's grace from the start.

John Calvin believed that the eternal predestination of God governed every action. He defined the principle of predestination as "before the foundation of the world he has elected us. But, from the time of election itself, we gather that it is free. For, how could we have possessed worth... before the world itself was created?"[220]. This principle implies several points. First, election occurred before the creation of the world and thus before any works or merit. Second, predestination is arbitrary and Calvin attributes this free election completely to the grace and pleasure of God.

Calvin understands the election of God as "the good pleasure of God which He has in Himself, He excludes all other causes"[221]. The election of God is based on faith.

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[220] Joseph Haroutunian, and L. P. Smith, Calvin: Commentaries Volume XXII (London: SCM Press, 1958), 303.

[221] John Calvin, Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God trans. Reid, (London: Camelot Press Ltd., 1961), 69.

The elect are those whom "God calls by the Gospel to the hope of salvation, whom He engrafts into the body of Christ, and whom He makes heirs of eternal life: It is those whom by His eternal and secret counsel He adopted to Himself as sons"[222]. Calvin argues that one's election by God precedes faith, in fact, it is "the cause and beginning of faith"[223]. A person is not elected because of their present faith, but rather, in order that they might have faith:

> He does not call them elect because they are about to believebut in order that they might believe, he does not call them electwhom God foresaw would be holy and immaculate, but in order that they might be made so[224].

This argument challenges election based on works or merit. Election precedes even the creation of the world and is thus removed completely from human endeavouring. But "God is not to be understood as foreseeing something in them which procures grace from them; rather they are foreknown because they were freely chosen"[225]. Calvin emphasizes that there is no ambiguity in the election of God. It predates and thus precludes any action or appeal on the part of humanity. Ultimately, "the salvation of the faithful depends upon the

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[222] Calvin, Eternal 69-70.

[223] Ibid., 70.

[224] Ibid., 69.

[225] Ibid., 71.

eternal election of God and that for this no cause can be given except His gratuitous good pleasure"[226].

2.5.1 The Process of Election

Calvin argues that salvation is based on God's foreknowledge, election and reprobation and is separate from any works, merit or the Law. It is based on God's hidden grace and mercy, but God does not merely foresee good acts or merit. Foreknowledge is not "a mere knowing beforehand... It is rather the act of adoption by which God has always distinguished His children from those who are reprobate"[227]. In this sense God's foreknowledge is proactive; He elects before any action or earned merit, rather than simply reacting in the form of reward or punishment. An interesting question is "whether what He foresees is what He will make of them or what they will be in themselves"[228]. In other words, there is a connection between a person's actions and whether or not they have received grace.

In the election of God, some are chosen, the elect, and some are rejected, the reprobate. This, according to

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[226] Ibid., 68.

[227] Haroutunian, 308.

[228] Calvin, Eternal 71.

Calvin's interpretation of Romans 9:14[229], demonstrates a dual purpose. The elect serve to make one "contemplate the mercy of God" and the reprobate to "acknowledge His righteous judgement"[230]. In his analogy of created vessels (Romans 9:22-3), Paul struggles with the reasons for the election of some and the rejection of others. But he fails to explain why some are rejected and attributes it to the mystery of God. Calvin argues that "the elect differ from the reprobate only in the fact of their deliverance from the same gulf of destruction... by no merit of their own but by the goodness of God"[231]. Despite Romans 11:7[232], which suggests that some were wicked, "it is not those whose wickedness has earned it who were blinded, but those who were rejected by God before the foundation of the world"[233]. But, this gives no reason for the basis of a particular election.

Calvin argues that God is blameless in His rejection of

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[229] "What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means!".

[230] John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries: The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), 203.

[231] Calvin, Commentaries, 211.

[232] "What then? Israel failed to obtain what it sought. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened" (Romans 11:7).

[233] Calvin, Commentaries, 244.

the reprobate. Paul, Calvin argues, says that "those who are left aside by God have the principle of their ruin and damnation from themselves"[234]. Calvin insists that "the source of wickedness which in itself provokes the wrath of God is in the perversity of natures which God has left alone"[235]. However, if God's election is not based on the foreknowledge of one's characters, then this "perversity of nature' should not influence election. Would one still be wicked if one had been elected instead of being passed over? Does the election of God determine the depth of one's faith or wickedness? Calvin's response is that it is not God who causes wickedness. Like Paul[236], he argues that "the cause of eternal rejection is so hidden that there is nothing left for us to do but to be amazed at the incomprehensible mind of God"[237]. Thus, God is ultimately without blame. Calvin even argues that God's willingness to reject the reprobate shows "the excellence of His wisdom and Justice [238]. But it does not answer the question.

The separation of elect and reprobate parallels the

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[234] Haroutunian, 298.

[235] Haroutunian, 298.

[236] "How are unsearchable are his judgements and how inscrutable his ways!" (Romans 11:33b).

[237] Haroutunian, 298.

[238] Ibid., 301.

separation which takes place among the descendants of Abraham. Calvin argues that Paul proposes in Romans 9:6b[239] that "the promise was given to Abraham and to his seed, but in such a way that his inheritance does not relate to all his descendants without distinction"[240]. Paul separates Abraham's descendants into two groups: the children of the flesh and the children of the promise. The elect are the children of the promise thus challenging the election of the entire Jewish nation as a whole. Calvin argues that the whole nation was chosen "when the promise of salvation had been offered to them and confirmed by the symbol of circumcision"[241], but many of the Jews rejected it. This created a distinction "with regard to the fulfilment of the promise"[242] and thus Calvin argues, not all were included in the true election of God.

This idea first surfaces in Romans 9:8 [243]. Calvin maintains that:

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[239] "For not all who are descended from Israel are from Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his descendants" (Romans 9:6b-7).

[240] Calvin, Commentaries 197.

[241] Ibid., 197.

[242] Ibid.

[243] "This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants" (Romans 9:8).

> If the seed is called in Isaac and not in Ishmael, and Isaac is no less the son of Abraham (than) Ishmael, it must be that not all the natural sons are to be regarded as the seed, but that the promise is fulfilled in a special way only in some[244].

According to Calvin, this passage demonstrates that there exists a difference between the descendants of Abraham and that not all are to be counted among the elect. Calvin argues that:

> As the blessing of the covenant separates the people of Israel from all other nations, so also the election of God makes a distinction between men in that nation, while He predestines some to salvation and others to eternal condemnation[245].

Calvin argues that the rejection of one brother and the election of the other is not based on works or merit. The purpose of choosing Isaac even before his birth was so that "the purpose of God according to election might stand, not in works, but in Him who calls"[246]. Since election is governed by the hidden counsel of God, there is no human basis for the choice, only the pleasure of God.

Like his predecessors, Calvin argues that the election of God is not based on works, merit or Law. He sees Paul's references to Jacob and Esau, Isaac and Ishmael, as a demonstration of an election which precedes good deeds or

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[244] Calvin, Commentaries, 198.

[245] Calvin, Commentaries, 200.

[246] Calvin, Eternal,76.

actions. He says that "God could not have paid any regard to works which did not yet exist"[247]. When Paul adds "not of works, but of him that calleth" (Rom 9:11), Calvin maintains that Paul means to "exclude all consideration of works"[248]. Even the 'zeal' of the Jews (Rom 10:2) is insufficient to warrant election because such zeal or efforts are "to be ascribed entirely to the counsel of God"[249]. One is not chosen "because they are deserving"; election is "independent either of our will or our effort... (it is) attributed wholly to the divine goodness, which freely takes those who neither will to achieve not strive for.. such a thing"[250]. With this argument Calvin condemns the Jewish effort to attain salvation. He says that their "endeavour(s) to obtain salvation by... works are justly rejected, for they are doing everything in their power to destroy faith without which no salvation can be hoped for"[251]. Calvin contrasts faith with merit and declares them mutually exclusive.

It is possible to see how Calvin applies this to the

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[247] Calvin, Commentaries, 200.

[248] Ibid., 201.

[249] Ibid., 205.

[250] Calvin, Commentaries, 205.

[251] Ibid., 217.

Jews. He argues that:

> those who seek to be justified by their own works are false interpreters of the Law, because the Law had been given to lead us... to another righteousness... to Christ[252].

Likewise, Calvin opposes grace with works. He insists that "if we establish one we destroy the other"[253]. He says that:

> If God chooses some and rejects others according to His foreknowledge of whether they will be worthy... of salvation, then the reward of works has already been established, and the grace of God will not bear sole sway but will only be a half part of our election[254].

Whether election is based on deeds that are already done or deeds that will be done, it would still be based on something other than the grace of God. Thus, any future good deeds of Isaac or anyone else would have no influence on their election.

Calvin ultimately argues that God's election rests solely on His grace and hidden counsel. Paul establishes this when he presents the choice of Jacob over Esau. Calvin says that the "cause of discrimination, which might otherwise be sought in the merits of each, Paul assigns to the hidden counsel of God, that the purpose of God might

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[252] Ibid., 221.

[253] Ibid., 242.

[254] Ibid., 242.

stand"[255]. This grace is bestowed upon whomever God pleases and no one is elected based on merit or works. Calvin maintains: "Let no one think that those who are elected are chosen because they are deserving"[256]. But Calvin, like Paul[257], cautions that it is not for humanity to understand. He says that it "is unfitting that the things which are contained in the secret counsel of God should come under the censure of men"[258]. It is to be left entirely in the control of God. Calvin concludes that:

> It is not of him that wills or him that runs but of God that shows mercy. For if the salvation of men is wholly comprehended within the mercy of God, and God saves none but those whom in His secret good pleasure He chose, there is nothing left over for man to do[259].

Calvin concludes that it is not for humanity to understand or question the actions of God. It is only for humanity to accept it.

It is for this reason, argues Calvin, that Paul can explain the Gentile calling. In fact, Calvin insists, God's purpose had been to offer salvation to the Gentiles from the

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[255] Calvin, Eternal,78.

[256] Calvin, Commentaries, 205.

[257] "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?" (Romans 11:34); "But who are you, a man,to answer back to God?" (Romans 9:20).

[258] Calvin, Commentaries, 210.

[259] Calvin, Eternal,82.

beginning. He says that:

> Although the Gospel was not heard at that time among the Gentiles, yet the whole workmanship of heaven and earth... proclaimed its Author by its preaching... even during the time in which the Lord confined the favour of His covenant to Israel, He did not withdraw the knowledge of Himself from the Gentiles[260].

The Gentiles, with the advent of the gospel, were directly called to receive salvation. The only requirement is faith:

> The Gentiles obtained righteousness by faith only because God anticipated their faith by His grace. Had they first aspired to righteousness by means of faith, they would still have been pursuing it. Faith itself, therefore, is a part of grace[261].

This offer of salvation marks a new universalism on the part of the gospel. Paul cites scripture in Romans 9:25[262] to affirm the Gentile calling. Calvin argues that Paul is "point(ing) out (that) the way by which men obtain salvation (is) as common and accessible to the Gentiles as to the Jews"[263]. Any distinction is now removed. According to Calvin, Paul is saying that the "God of all mankind (will) display His kindness to all by whom He has been invoked and

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[260] Calvin, Commentaries,234.

[261] Calvin, Commentaries,217; "Election and Predestination" Haroutunian, 299.

[262] "As indeed he says in Hosea 'Those who were not my people I will call my people'" (Romans 9:25; Hosea 2:23).

[263] Calvin, Commentaries,228.

acknowledged as their God"[264]. But there are two important points to note. The fall of the Jews resulted in Gentile salvation and there is hope that this will provoke the Jews to jealousy and move them to repent[265]. In fact, Paul insists that the Gentiles "lose no benefit if the Jews return again into favour with God... the salvation of the Gentiles is so annexed to the salvation of the Jews that the same means is able to advance both"[266]. Calvin argues that Paul expects the return of the Jews into God's favour and is preparing the Gentiles for it.

2.5.2 Present State of the Jews

Calvin maintains the promises of God to the Jews and emphasizes their many blessings. By this he upholds the faithfulness of God. He says that they possessed "the exalted privilege of being separated from the common order of mankind"[267]. The Jews are "descended from saints and men loved by God... Christ had proceeded from them"[268]. Like

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[264] Ibid., 229.

[265] Ibid., 246.

[266] Ibid., 247.

[267] Calvin, Commentaries, 193.

[268] Ibid., 195.

Paul[269], Calvin agrees that the Abrahamic covenant still stands because "the favour of God could not fail the Israelites without abolishing the covenant... the grace of God would constantly remain among the Jewish people"[270]. In the beginning, Calvin says, the Jews were "sanctified by a holy covenant and adorned by a peculiar honour of which God did not at that time deem the Gentiles worthy"[271]. To the Jews belong the first fruits[272], and despite their fall they are still the natural branches (Rom 11:17-24).

The Jews possessed many blessings and yet they rejected the gospel. Calvin says that Paul's purpose was "to make us accept the fact that it has seemed good to God to enlighten some in order that they might be saved, and blind others in order that they might be destroyed"[273]. While Paul does not say outright that God hardened the Jews, Calvin argues that this is so: "God in some measure has blinded Israel in such a way that while they reject the light of the gospel, it is

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[269] "But it is not as though the word of God had failed" (Romans 9:6).

[270] Calvin, Commentaries,196.

[271] Ibid., 249.

[272] "If the dough offered as first fruits is holy, so is the whole lump; and if the root is holy, so are the branches" (Romans 11:16).

[273] Calvin, Commentaries,207.

transferred to the Gentiles"[274]. The Jews also faltered with misplaced zeal. Calvin argues that "Israel has laboured in vain in seeking for salvation, because it strove with misplaced zeal... (they) made no progress in struggling after righteousness"[275]. For the Jews, Jesus especially became an obstacle. Calvin insists that the Jews were offended by Christ, and that for them Christ became a stone of stumbling[276]. Calvin says that:

> it was certainly a formidable obstacle for the weak to see the teaching of Christ rejected by all those whom God had appointed heirs of His eternal covenant... The whole nation to which the Messiah had been promised repudiated Him[277].

According to Calvin, the chief crime of the Jews was unbelief[278]. Unlike the Gentiles who accepted salvation by faith the Jews accomplished nothing by their zeal "because by running out of the way they have been wearing themselves to no purpose"[279]. The result is that the Jews are now at a common level with the Gentiles. As Paul says, "For there is

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[274] Ibid., 254; Romans 11:25.

[275] Ibid., 243.

[276] "Why? Because they did not pursue it through faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone" (Romans 9:32).

[277] Calvin, Eternal,46.

[278] Calvin, Commentaries,257.

[279] Ibid., 217.

no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him" (Rom 10:12).

From Calvin's arguments it would seem that the Jews are completely cut off and justly punished. But according to Calvin, Paul wanted to prevent any notion of abrogation. It is absurd, says Calvin, that "the covenant should be disobeyed by any human unfaithfulness"[280]. Israel's fall, however, did have implications. First, "God had by no means rejected the whole race of Abraham" and "His secret election preceded adoption"[281]. Only those He foresaw would not have faith were rejected and those who would have faith were elected. This occurred before Jewish adoption as 'chosen people'. Ultimately Calvin concluded that the Jews have not fallen permanently from grace[282]. For the present time, however, they temporarily possess a spirit of stupor[283]. In the end, though, Israel will include "all the people of God, in this sense 'when the Gentiles have come in' the Jews will at the same time return from their defection to the

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[280] Ibid., 238.

[281] Calvin, Commentaries,239.

[282] Ibid., 246.

[283] Ibid., 244.

obedience of faith"[284].

2.6 Summation

Chrysostom is the harshest of the four interpreters with regard to the Jews and their place within Messianic salvation. He, like the other three, argues that the Jews will eventually be provoked to jealousy and will return to God. Paul claims that their exists an 'allayment' for the Jews which will preserve a place for them at the end of time. Unfortunately, Chrysostom's harsh polemic against Judaizing Christians negatively influences his interpretation of Romans 9-11. Despite the claim of some that he was railing against Judaizing Christians and not the Jewish people, his own words indicate otherwise. He claims that the Law is now fulfilled in Christ and there is no longer a place for Jews within Messianic salvation unless they convert to Christianity and renounce their Jewish ties. Because he felt that the Jewish religion was a threat to Christianity as the 'true' religion, he refused to see Judaism as a valid religious path to God. Paul himself never claims that the Jewish religion is to be abolished with the development of Christianity yet this is exactly what Chrysostom suggests.

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[284] Ibid., 254.

Augustine offers the best interpretation of Paul. His arbitrary predestination is the foundation of Calvin's but his emphasis on faith over Law influenced Luther. The result is a predestined election that is based on the future possession of faith. Augustine argues, as does Calvin much later, that God predestines some to be saved and some to be damned. But there is a basis for this and that basis is the future possession of faith. In other words, God foresees whom among humanity will believe in Him and whom will not. Upon those who believe he bestows mercy and the rest he condemns. However, Augustine separates this election from judgement. God elects the chosen at the beginning of time but punishes the condemned at the end of time. An inconsistency is that the condemned will be punished for their deeds and works while the chosen are elected based on faith. The only way that this would make sense is if God lets the reprobates live their lives in the hope that they will eventually come to have faith.

Augustine's consideration of the place of good works in Paul and Christianity allows for a connection between Judaism and Christianity. Instead of dismissing good works entirely, as does Luther and Calvin, Augustine argues that good works are the result of the Holy Spirit. When God foresees those who will possess faith he bestows grace upon them in the form of the Holy Spirit. It is this grace and

Holy Spirit that motivates the good works. Thus the good works in this case are attributable to God and not to one's own actions. This is the primary reason for which Augustine thinks the Jews were rejected. They performed good works on their own without the benefit of the grace of God. Augustine also argues that those condemned perform "evil" acts because of their lack of grace or the lack of the presence of the Holy Spirit, not because God predestined them to sin. God foresaw that they would not believe and thus did not bestow the Holy Spirit on them.

Augustine, like Luther and Calvin, understands the Jewish rejection as temporary. They are not being punished for a lack of faith but because they attempted to reach on their own that which should come from God: righteousness. But now that Jesus has come there is a new means by which to attain salvation and that is through faith. Augustine believes that the Jews will eventually possess this faith and that God foresaw this change of heart. Thus they will not be rejected forever. Even their rejection has brought good, namely the entry of the Gentiles into the messianic salvation. Augustine's examination of Romans 9-11 was gentler than Luther's or Calvin's, and it is also the closest based upon a reading of Paul's original text. It is obvious that Paul believed that faith was the basis of God's election and that the law played a part in bringing

salvation to the Gentiles. But God does not reject or elect arbitrarily and this, despite Calvin, is definitely not evident in Romans 9-11.

Martin Luther argued that faith, not law and works, is the basis of salvation. He says that "God judges according to what is in the depths of the heart... his law... cannot be satisfied with works"[285]. He argues that all people are sinful and that obedience to the law can only increase sin. But the law itself is "good and just and holy"[286], therefore it was humanity that misunderstood it. Luther separates "doing" the law and "fulfilling" the law and he argues that humanity performed the works intellectually instead of fulfilling the law itself through faith. Luther says that "To fulfil the law is to do its works with pleasure and love, to live a godly and good life of one's own accord; without the compulsion of the law"[287]. In other words, it is necessary to follow the law because one believes in God rather than just because it exists. It is evident that Luther believed the law was no longer necessary. God sent Jesus so that people might believe and have faith. Luther

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[285] Luther, Martin, "(1546) Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans" Luther's Works (v35) Word and Sacrament (Phil: Fortress Press, 1960), 367.

[286] Luther, "Preface", 367.

[287] Ibid., 368.

makes a strong argument for the reason he understands humanity as sinful and unable to reach salvation by their own actions:

> The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel as being of faith, so it follows that all men are ungodly and wicked. For it would be foolish of God to reveal righteousness to men if they ... knew it already"[288].

This is a sentiment that is often repeated in Paul. For example in Galations 2:21 he says "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification were through the law, then Christ dies to no purpose".

According to Luther, God provides us with salvation in the form of a gift which is offered as a result of the resurrection of Jesus. Luther says that this grace is "the goodwill which in himself he bears toward us, by which he is disposed to give us Christ and to pour into us the Holy Spirit with his gifts"[289]. Acceptance of God's grace results in the righteousness of God while obeying the law results in the righteousness of men. When Luther approaches Romans 9-11, he does so with these ideas in mind. Since "our salvation may be taken entirely out of our hands and put into the hand of God alone"[290], the law is no longer the way

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[288] Rupp, Luther and Erasmus,294-5.

[289] Luther, "Preface", 369.

[290] Ibid., 378.

to attain salvation. This is how Luther understands the rejection of the Jews: they tried to attain righteousness by their own works instead of leaving it to the power of God. With the coming of Christ all that is required is faith. But this is also why Luther views the rejection of the Jews as temporary. The means to salvation still exist and once the Jews accept it in faith they will be restored to God.

Paul, according to Luther, is arguing that faith is necessary for everyone. Before Christ, the Jews followed the law but works were not enough to attain salvation. But now, argues Luther, "the righteousness of God is manifested apart from the law... the righteousness of God... is through faith in Jesus Christ"[291]. Upon confessing this faith, believers receive grace and are thus justified. Luther sees Paul as separating the law, and hence Judaism, from faith and Christianity. Faith in Christ has replaced merits and works. The reason that the law is no longer valid is because Christ has fulfilled it. Every word, commandment and prediction, Luther understands as pointing to Christ. But Luther believes there is a place reserved for the Jews. He points out that Jesus is of Jewish descent, that Christ has fulfilled their law, and that Judaism sustained the roots of Christianity. Thus he maintains that the Jews will

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[291] Rupp, 307.

be restored to God at the end of time.

John Calvin also believed that faith in Christ replaced a dependence on the law. But unlike Luther, who argued that Jesus fulfilled the law and was thus still connected to Judaism, Calvin argues that the Jews were predestined to fall. The covenant between God and the Jews is still relevant but does not work because the Jews disobeyed it. Calvin argues that they were predestined to do so. With his discussion of Paul's vessel analogy, Calvin stresses that the Jews were created to demonstrate the wrath of God. Calvin argues that the law was never meant to be the means to salvation.

Calvin depicts the promise to Sarah in Genesis 18:10 to be evidence that works do not attain salvation and that salvation is attributable only to the power and will of God. God willed at the beginning of time who shall be elected and who shall be condemned. Calvin stresses that Paul's phrase "I will have mercy and compassion on whom I will"[292] means that man has no means by which to appeal to God. God makes his decision without regard to merit or worth; it is determined by His will. Calvin says that:

> if the salvation of men is wholly comprehended within the mercy of God and God saves none but those whom in his secret pleasure He chose, there

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[292] Calvin, Eternal,81.

is nothing left over for men to do[293].

Humanity searches for a basis for God's election because it is unable to understand how the power and will of God works. The counsel of God, argues Calvin, "is undoubtably more profound and more deeply concealed than the human mind can attain"[294].

Calvin's theory of predestination faces several problems. First of all, it reduces the importance of the covenant between God and the Jews. But Calvin disputes this importance to begin with. He argues that the Jews did not obey the covenant correctly. He also argues that "not all the posterity of Abraham descended from him according to the flesh possesses this privilege"[295]. The covenantal promises were not offered to all and God arbitrarily rejected some. Calvin uses the examples of Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and Esau to illustrate this point. Calvin argues that the Jewish election was a general one as opposed to a specific election which was aimed primarily toward the Jews. But Calvin's need to attribute everything to the power of God lessens the importance of the original status of the Jews as the "chosen people". Calvin's predestination offers no

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[293] Ibid., 83.

[294] Ibid., 87.

[295] Calvin, Eternal,91.

basis for God's election. It is completely arbitrary and faith plays no place in it.

However, faith is very much a part of Pauline theology. It is faith which Paul presents as the basis for attaining salvation. Even in the three short chapters of Romans 9-11, it is apparent that faith was important. Romans 9:30 says "Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, righteousness through faith". In chapter 10 Paul writes "everyone who has faith may be justified" (v.4). Romans 10:9b says "believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved". Faith is even applied to the position of the Jews. Romans 11:20 says "they were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith". Finally, Romans 11:23 says that "even the [Jews], if they do not persist in their unbelief, will be grafted in". By attributing the election of God entirely to his will and power Calvin ignores the faith of the believers. But it is through this choice to accept what is heard and to believe it, that the believer is saved. As a result of this faith, God bestows his mercy in the form of salvation.

3.0 MODERN EXEGESIS OF ROMANS 9-11

3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I examined some typical classical interpretations of Romans 9-11 spanning one thousand years. It was evident that in each case, all four scholars, Chrysostom, Augustine, Luther and Calvin, were influenced by their own particular polemic. In this chapter, I will show how, in many instances, Augustine, Luther and Calvin influenced later writers. The influence of Chrysostom's harsh anti-Jewish stance is not so obvious, but it is clear that many modern writers are in fact reacting to the kind of anti-Judaism exhibited by Chrysostom. Each of the modern interpreters strives to maintain a place of importance for the Jews within the Christian dispensation, and like Paul, they each argue that the Jews possess a role in the plan of God.

It is important to note that there is a difference in the hermeneutical methodology utilized by classical exegetes and post-Enlightenment, modern scholars. The classical exegetes lived and wrote during the time that the New Testament scriptures were being considered and compiled. They, unlike the modern exegetes, had a close relationship with the text. However, with such a close relationship it is

difficult to step outside the context in order to observe and interpret objectively. As is evident in my first chapter, the classical exegetes argued primarily from a faith perspective because that is the context in which they lived. Their faith in God and Christ does not have to detract from their arguments and interpretations. The modern scholars who study the New Testament, however, must remain distanced from the text because of an interim of 1800-1900 years. Because of such an interim, a historical hermeneutic has developed. Modern scholars can not only look back to the original context of the biblical text, but can observe the influences that the text has undergone in history. This does not suggest that distance from the text means a better interpretation; it simply means that the two groups, classical and modern exegetes, approached their interpretations in a slightly different manner.

The influence of Augustine may be seen on Stendahl. Augustine's 'Original Sin' permeates Stendahl's description of the introspective conscience of the West, which was in turn influenced by the Lutheran belief that justification by faith was the answer to a plagued conscience. Luther's influence may be seen especially in the work of W. D. Davies when he analyzes the dichotomy of Law and Gospel, he recognizes a Lutheran antipathy to anything related to the Jewish Torah. Finally, the predestination of Calvin is

present in Sanday and Headlam's stance on the universal, divine plan of God. Each of the five scholars I will examine, Sanday and Headlam, W. D. Davies, E. P. Sanders and Krister Stendahl, while being influenced at times by classical exegesis, provide their own unique contributions to the discussion of Paul and Romans 9-11.

While it is interesting to discuss the similarities between classical and modern interpreters of Romans 9-11, it is also interesting to identify the new contributions which each has made to Pauline scholarship. As was the case in classical exegesis, so here does the polemical question determine the answer. When Sanday and Headlam began their examination of Romans 9-11, a shift of ideologies was already beginning in typical Pauline scholarship. They recognize this and yet sometimes their interpretations are still rooted in the classical pitfalls. They are, however, beginning to ask new questions. Of primary importance to Sanday and Headlam is the divine purpose and plan of God. But they are often so concerned with upholding the absolute authority of God's power that they fall prey to the same traps as Calvin's predestination. As a result, they argue that the Jews are rejected entirely because of their own culpability and because they misunderstood the promises of God. In fact, they argue that the entire nation of Israel was never intended to be elected in totality; only those

upon whom God bestows grace will be elected and thus saved.

W. D. Davies, on the other hand, begins to examine the Jewish question in its own Jewish context and he considers the possibility of an ethnic distinction being reintroduced for the salvation of Israel. He concludes however that this is not the case but despite this God will uphold His promises to Israel because of the original covenant. In other words, Israel is not saved because of an ethnic privilege but by a historical one. Ultimately, though, Davies maintains that since faith is the only requirement for salvation, the Jews will in the end become absorbed into the Christian church.

Sanders, like Davies, examines the faithfulness of God to His promises to Israel, but does so in light of the 'new dispensation' and an emphasis on messianic importance. He argues that there is a contradiction between God's promises through the Law and the offer of salvation only by faith. He also argues against a two-covenant theology of salvation because of Paul's connection of Jewish salvation to the Gentile mission. Moreover, he asserts that the Jews are guilty of exclusivism: the self-righteousness which they strive for is available only to followers of the Law.

Stendahl, on the other hand, rather than assessing the culpability of the Jews, focuses on the relation between Jews and Gentiles. He argues that justification by faith

was never intended to be the solution to Luther's troubled conscience but rather was a defense of the place of Gentiles in God's salvation. He even offers a reason for the Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah: it did not appear that the appearance of Jesus heralded the beginning of the eschaton or the arrival of the Kingdom. While Stendahl, too, dismisses the possibility of a dual-covenant theology he stresses that Paul never says that the Jews must accept Jesus as Messiah in order to be saved by God.

The first of the modern scholars we will examine are Sanday and Headlam. Their commentary on Romans is considered by many to be one of the most important. While much of their interpretation is based in classical exegesis, in their work a shift is evident, both in the kinds of questions they ask and in their new emphasis on the Jews.

3.2 Sanday and Headlam

Sanday and Headlam base their interpretation of Romans 9-11 on the divine plan of God, an idea which pervades every aspect of their understanding of Paul's letter. According to Sanday and Headlam, God has a divine plan for all of humanity, which He enacts through His universal offer of grace and election. This plan had worldwide implications; it was intended to offer salvation to all of

humanity and not just to the Jewish people. They argue that Paul is attempting to illustrate that throughout God's action there is running a "purpose according to election"[296]. They maintain that:

> St. Paul is speaking not of the scheme of election, or of election in itself, but of God's plan for the salvation of mankind, a plan which proceeded on the principle of election [297].

Sanday and Headlam's connection between election and the divine plan of God is made to defend the place of the Gentiles in God's salvation. It ultimately challenges the exclusive priority of Israel as a chosen people. God did make irrevocable promises to Israel but these, according to Sanday and Headlam, were misunderstood. Salvation, they argue, was never intended solely for the Jews.

Sanday and Headlam's interpretation rests on five interrelated aspects of the connection between God's divine plan and His election. They first, unsuccessfully, attempt to reconcile the new universal righteousness with the previous exalted state of the Jews. Their solution is problematic. The Jews sinned and also misunderstood the promises of God. Sanday and Headlam, like Calvin, upheld the absolute authority of God to enact His plan and offer

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[296] W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902, 1968), 246.

[297] Ibid., 341.

His grace. But this is reminiscent of the problems of Calvin's predestination. For instance, if the Jews are removed from their exalted position as "chosen" by their own actions, then free will must play a part. But this challenges the "absolute power" of God. Unfortunately they spend little time explaining this premise beyond a mention and instead devote their time to describing the manner in which some Jews are elected and some are not. They try, like Paul, to explain the Jewish rejection as part of God's plan but are unable to explain why this rejection was necessary. They point out that the rejection was foretold and that the Jews are culpable but one never learns why this must be part of God's divine plan. Sanday and Headlam are concerned that nothing challenges the divine authority of God.

3.2.1 Salvation

Sanday and Headlam assert a broadened view of God's plan of salvation. "The world" they argue, "not Israel, is the final end of God's action"[298]. But, according to Paul, the Jews held a privileged position and in Romans 9 he enumerates their privileges: the Law, the promises, the fathers, even the Messiah is descended from them (Rom 9:4-

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[298] Sanday, 250.

5). Yet Sanday and Headlam argue that this exalted position did not mean that God's salvation was intended only for the Jews. The Jews misunderstood that salvation was to be offered on a worldwide scale from the beginning. They assert that:

> the idea of election has lost all its higher side. It is looked on as a covenant by which God is bound... to Israel [299].

But this is incorrect, argue Sanday and Headlam. While the Israelites may be bound to God in some way, God's own power and authority precludes any obligation on His part. Now that Jesus has, according to Paul, revealed a new approach to righteousness, the plan of God must be reexamined. Instead of a plan which exalts Jews, argue Sanday and Headlam, and as a result offers salvation to the Gentiles, it becomes:

> a universal Divine purpose which had worked through the ages on the principle of election, which was now beginning to be revealed and understood, and which St. Paul will explain and vindicate in the chapters that follow[300].

When Sanday and Headlam attempt to reconcile a universal righteousness with the exalted status of the Jews they are in a sense asking the same question which concerned Paul: Is God faithful to His promises? Paul, of course,

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[299] Ibid., 249.

[300] Sanday, 250.

answers with an emphatic affirmative although he does not explain how he knows this. He essentially admonishes humanity, the created, not to question God, the creator. Sanday and Headlam strive to comprehend why, if the Jews were the intended goal toward which God's plan aimed, how is it that they now reject what Paul considers the culmination of this plan: Jesus as Messiah. They assert that the rejection of Israel is not inconsistent with the divine promises; God's word has not failed. Their first attempt at a solution to this dilemma is that the Jews misunderstood God's plan and the covenant but this is not an idea which comes from Paul.

According to Paul, to the Jews belong all the privileges:

> οιτινες εισιν Ισραηλιται, ων η υιοθεσια και η δοξα και αι διαθηκαι και η νομοθεσια και η λατρεια και αι επαγγελιαι, ων οι πατερες και εξ ων ο Χριστος το κατα σαρκα· (Romans 9:4-5).

Even his analogy of the olive tree represents the importance of the Jews in the plan of God. While the Gentiles were grafted in, Israel is the root:

> ει δε τινες των κλαδων εξεκλασθησαν, συ δε αγριελαιος ων ενεκεντρισθης εν αυτοις και συγκοινωνος της ριζης της πιοτητος της ελαιας εγενου , μη κατακαυχω των κλαδων· ει δε κατακαυχασαι ου συ την ριζαν βασταζεις αλλα η ρίζα σε· (Romans 11:17-18).

From an analysis of this particular passage it seems evident

that the Jews indeed possessed an exalted status in the plan of God. However, Sanday and Headlam argue that while the promises that were "made to the Jews ... were always held to apply particularly to them"[301], their mistake was in assuming that no one but the Jews were offered salvation. Paul himself understood that not every Jew without distinction would be elected (Rom 9:8) as his examples of Jacob and Esau, and Isaac and Ishmael illustrate. But Sanday and Headlam argue that Paul's list of the Jewish privileges primarily demonstrates the distance that now exists between God and the Jews. They assert:

> the Messiah whose coming represented in a sense the consummation of its history... and yet from any share in the glories of this epoch, the Chosen People themselves were cut off[302].

3.2.2 Human Responsibility

The second solution Sanday and Headlam develop to reconcile God's faithfulness with the chosen status of the Jews, does in fact correspond with what Paul says. They assert that the Jews were culpable in their own rejection. But to maintain this notion they must demonstrate that the Jewish rejection is consistent with the justice of God.

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[301] Sanday, 231.

[302] Ibid., 232.

They must stress that "the Jews *especially* had sinned"[303]. Paul illustrates the justice of God in Romans 9:6-29, and in 9:30-10:21 he presents the guilt of the Jews[304]. There is no dispute that Paul believes that the Jews possess some guilt.

By demonstrating the culpability of the Jews and their own rejection, Sanday and Headlam are illustrating that any promises between God and the Jews were in fact broken by the Jews themselves. First and foremost, the Jews were forewarned of what would happen. Romans 9:25-6, a reference to the biblical passage of Hosea 1:10, predicts the calling of the Gentiles: "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people', and her who was not beloved I will call 'my beloved'". Sanday and Headlam argue that Romans 9:30-10:13 describe the culpability of the Jews. They rejected the Messiah and they pursued the wrong righteousness instead of adhering to God's[305]. Like Paul, Sanday and Headlam reject any objection that the Jews did not know that a new righteousness was being offered. Paul, in 10:14-21, argues that the "full and universal preaching of the gospel (was

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[303] Sanday, 226 (italics added).

[304] Ibid.

[305] Sanday, 278.

done by) their own prophets"[306]. In fact, Sanday and Headlam argue, "Israel's unbelief is not excused by want of opportunity"[307]. According to Paul, the message was preached throughout the land (Isa 52:7; 53:1). The Jews were given the warnings and knowledge, yet, argue Sanday and Headlam and Paul, they chose to reject it.

Sanday and Headlam move now from the realm of human responsibility to the realm of divine authority and the election of God.

3.2.3 Election of God

Sanday and Headlam argue that Paul's "separation passages" of the Jews illustrate that the nation of Jews in totality was never intended to receive salvation: "For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel" (Rom 9:6). God's promises meant that only some people throughout history would receive the benefit of His promises. Thus, grace would be bestowed without any basis in merit, deed or character. Election, they argue, is based entirely on the divine authority of God and without any human

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[306] Ibid; "But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for 'their voice has gone out to all the earth, and the words to the ends of the world' (Rom 10:18).

[307] Ibid., 292.

intervention[308]. Paul's passage on the separation of children of the flesh and promise illustrates this (Rom 9:6-8). Not even all the descendants of Abraham were to be counted among the elect. The bestowal of grace then is entirely separated from any human aspect and instead is entirely controlled by God. According to Sanday and Headlam:

> Paul does not mean here to distinguish a spiritual Israel (i.e. the Christian Church) from the fleshly Israel, but to state that the promises made to Israel might be fulfilled even if some of his descendants were shut out from them[309].

In other words, any divine promises made were made only to those who were intended to receive grace, not to the complete nation of Israel without distinction. According to Sanday and Headlam, the divine plan of God began with a universalistic aspect, offering salvation to all with faith rather than a particularistic aspect, offering only to the Jews first. They argue that "not all the physical descendants of Jacob are necessarily inheritors of the divine promises implied in the sacred name Israel"[310]. In other words, not every Jew was supposed to be elected. God never pledged Himself to Israel in totality, argue Sanday

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[308] Sanday, 239.

[309] Ibid., 240.

[310] Sanday, 240.

and Headlam. Even some of Abraham's descendants were rejected. They conclude that God elects based on His absolute power and yet the Jews were rejected because of their own actions: a contradictory notion. Like Calvin, Sanday and Headlam's interpretation faces the problem of divine authority versus free will.

According to Calvin and his principle of predestination, God elects us before the creation of the world and thus before any works or merit. This election is entirely without bias and is attributed entirely to God[311]. But this interpretation is problematic. It reduces the importance of the covenant between God and the Jews. But Calvin, like Sanday and Headlam, disagrees with its importance anyway. By upholding a universal offering of salvation from the beginning as opposed to "the Jew first", Sanday and Headlam are agreeing with Calvin's assessment that God's election of the Jews was a general one as opposed to true election. With regard to the Jews' responsibility in obeying the covenant, Sanday and Headlam argue that they both misunderstood it and they sinned, and Calvin argues that they did not obey it correctly.

This idea of an arbitrary election is rooted in Paul's analogy of created vessels: η ουκ εχει εξουσιαν ο κεραμευς του

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[311] Haroutunian, Calvin's Commentaries, 37.

πηλου εκ του αυτου φυραματος ποιησαι ο μεν εις τιμην σκευος ο δε εις ατιμιαν; (Rom 9:21). God is using the elect and the reprobate to serve the universal divine purpose of election. They assert that "God can choose one person for a high purpose and one for a low purpose"[312]. But they cannot explain how the choice is made, just that it is made and is attributed to the absolute power of the creator[313]. Sanday and Headlam utilize Paul's example of Pharaoh to illustrate God's absolute power. Like Israel, they argue, Pharaoh was hardened and rejected[314]. Paul, they argue,

> is no longer confining himself to the special case of Pharaoh ... but he is considering the whole of God's dealings with the unbelieving Jews, and is laying down the principle which will afterwards be worked out in full- that the Jews deserved God's wrath, but that He had borne with them with great long-suffering (9:62)[315].

But once again this appears to refer not to the absolute power of God to arbitrarily elect, but to the culpability of the Jews. If God predestines or elects and rejects before creation, how can the Jewish rejection be attributed to their own actions? And if this rejection is part of God's divine plan, then God's wrath towards them is doubly

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[312] Sanday, 257.

[313] Ibid., 259.

[314] Sanday, 260.

[315] Ibid., 260.

perplexing. Sanday and Headlam's efforts to uphold solely the will of God, apart from any human intervention, challenges any notion of free will or free action. Thus, how are the Jews to blame?

The problem is simple to assess: if the Jews are to blame for their own rejection (9:30-10:21), which Sanday and Headlam believe Paul is arguing, [316] and chapter 9 proves that grace comes to humanity, not in response to one's effort, but in accordance with God's will, there exists a contradiction. It is the same situation presented by Paul's objector: "So then he has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills. You will say to me then 'Why does he still find fault?" (Rom 9:18-19). If God removes or withholds grace, as He did in the case of Pharaoh, then how is a person to blame for negative acts or a lack of faith? If everything is to be attributed solely to the will and power of God, and God elects before creation then the Jews must not possess any personal responsibility for their unbelief or misplaced zeal because it was either predestined or a result of a lack of grace. It would seem that Sanday and Headlam's interpretations face logical difficulties. On the one hand, everything that has occurred from the election to the Jewish rejection is part of God's

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[316] Sanday, 300.

divine plan, suggesting a high level of predestination. However, Sanday and Headlam assign to Israel culpability for their own rejection: the only way in which they are potentially able to be culpable is if they did indeed possess an exalted "chosen" position and if indeed they, in particular, were elected by God above any universal status.

This interpretation lessens the importance of faith to the Pauline theology. While Paul upholds God's absolute authority, he does not understand God to act arbitrarily in order to demonstrate his powers. Paul's use of the condition of faith in his olive tree analogy (Rom 11:20b) contradicts such an idea. Being "grafted in" is not at all arbitrary but rather rests on the possession of faith. But a discussion of faith is all but absent in the Sanday and Headlam analysis of Romans 9-11. They were concerned with upholding God's divine power and with assigning blame to the Jews. They ignore the idea that Paul's 'new righteousness' rests entirely on faith in Jesus as the Messiah. The Jewish failure, according to Paul, was disbelieving this, not in misunderstanding their relation to God and their relevance of the covenant to Israel.

3.3 W.D Davies

W. D. Davies, on the other hand, examines Paul's discussion on the Jews within its own context. He analyzes

the various methods of Jewish salvation in the same manner. This is an important contribution to Pauline scolarship because it assigns a place of importance to the Jews within Pauline literature. This, of course, is a reflection of Paul's own emphasis since Paul himself considered himself Jewish. By understanding Paul in his own Jewish context, it becomes more difficult to deny the importance of the Jewish religion for Paul.

W. D. Davies is one of the first modern New Testament scholars to examine both the Jewish question in Romans 9-11 as well as to analyze the ethnic dimensions of faithfulness and universality. He examines the question by first placing it in the context of the salvation-history of which Paul writes. He argues, like Paul, that God is faithful to his promises to the Jewish people and yet the Jews indeed were rejected. But, he asserts, Paul interjects an ethnic dimension of salvation in his assessment of the Jewish question, which is why he is able to argue in Romans 11 that the Jews will be saved. Davies also addresses the dichotomy of the gospel and Law which arose in classical interpretation and attempts to determine if its origin is found in Paul. He argues that there exists no instances of anti-semitism in Paul because, since context determines content and since Paul himself lived as a Jew, such self-imposed anti-semitism was impossible. Davies also analyzes

the result of anti-semitic interpretations of Paul: the development of a polar opposition between the priority or nationalism of Israel versus the "new" universalism of Christianity. Despite his assertion that the Jews will remain part of the people of God, and despite their predicted eventual salvation, Davies too clings to the belief that the only way to salvation is by the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. However, when Paul argues that faith is the only requirement and associates Abraham with the "children of the promise", it is possible to see a path to salvation based on faith in God as well as a faith in Jesus. It suggests the possibility that it is indeed possible to be saved without conversion by possessing a belief in God. Thus, according to Paul, the Jews are able to maintain their particularity and yet be brought to the salvation of God under the umbrella of the universal offer of grace.

3.3.1 Jews and Gentiles and Salvation-History

For Paul, Jesus was at the centre of salvation-history[317]. Davies argues that the scheme of salvation-history can be separated into three sections or eras: from the time of Adam to the time of the Law; from Moses to Christ; and finally the period inaugurated by Christ and

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[317] W.D. Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel" NTS 24, 5.

which replaced the Law[318]. This period, according to Paul, was to encompass both Jews and Gentiles but the mission to the Jews failed. Paul, however, maintained that despite this, God would be faithful to his promises.

In Romans 11:26, Paul asserts that all Israel will be saved but he attributes its salvation to a mystery of God (11:25-32). The question is whether this salvation required conversion to Christianity. Paul defines the present state of the Jews as 'hardened' and Davies argues that:

> their salvation therefore will be a deliverance from this condition. Paul does not exclusively claim that all Israel will ultimately believe in Jesus as the Christ, but simply that they will be saved [319].

However, Davies also asserts that the mystery of salvation mentioned in Romans 11:25-32 predicts the "absorption of all Jews in the Christian community, that is, the cessation of the distinct existence of Israel as a people... finally to lose their identity in the life of the church"[320]. Even if this does not mean the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, it definitely means the suppression of the Jewish identity in the Christian Church. To the 'mystery'

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[318] W. D. Davies, "Paul and the Law: Reflections on Pitfalls in Interpretations" Jewish and Pauline Studies (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 102.

[319] Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", 25.

[320] Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", 23.

are attributed two meanings. The nature of the mystery, Davies argues, was understood "in terms of the life, death and resurrection of Christ and the emergence of the church"[321]. For Paul, however, the mystery is also the eschatological hope of the gospel and the irrevocable promises of God to the Jews.

Davies analyzes methods of Jewish salvation within the new righteousness of Christ. He argues that Paul's reference in Romans 11:26 to a Redeemer "support(s) a special activity of God toward Israel at the end of history. The salvation of all Israel is associated with the coming of 'the redeemer' in Isaiah 59:20"[322]. But Davies associates the redeemer with Christ and thus overrides both Jewish particularity and their place as 'chosen people'. He says that:

> at the Parousia... the Jewish people are forgiven for their culpable hardness, accept Jesus as their Messiah and thus share in his forgiveness in his covenant[323].

This leaves no room whatsoever for the Jews to be saved as the "Jewish nation" itself. The only way is the conversion to Christianity. Davies does examine the possibility that two kinds of salvation may be offered: "one achieved by the

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[321] Ibid., 28.

[322] Ibid., 25.

[323] Ibid., 27.

direct activity of God for the Jews and another through Christ"[324]. But he disregards this approach because he argues that such an isolated reading of 11:25-27 leads to misinterpretation as well as juxtaposes 11:25-7 with 11:11 and 11:14 too harshly[325].

Evident however, is the fact that both Paul and Davies are quick to uphold the faithfulness of God to his promises. The fault, Davies asserts, is found in Jewish culpability. The Jews, he argues, mistakenly assumed that salvation itself rested entirely on one's kinship to Abraham. But Davies argues, "those who were physically descended from Abraham were not all responsive to God's call... not all Israel is Israel... not all Jews have responded in obedience to God's demand"[326]. Not only was there a distinction made amongst the descendants of Abraham but even some of the elected were disobedient. For Paul, the fact that many of his people did not accept Jesus as Messiah became a stumbling block. As he discussed the Jewish rejection he was, in essence, attempting to uphold the power of God. If this is God's plan and God's own people challenged it, his

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[324] Ibid., 28.

[325] Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", 28.

[326] W.D. Davies, "From Tyranny to Liberation: The Pauline Experience of Alienation and Reconciliation", Jewish and Pauline Studies (Philadelphia:Fortress Press, 1984), 202.

mission is threatened. In fact, the very failure of the mission of the Jews "raised acutely the question of the faithfulness or the reliability of the very God, who, Paul claimed, justified even the ungodly"[327]. Indeed, the very foundations of the faithfulness of God were being challenged.

But Paul developed an ingenious solution to this problem. Despite his earlier reservations of a dual-covenant theory, Davies agrees that it is possible that "Paul is thinking in Rom. 11:27 of the separate covenant which God already has with Israel"[328], a covenant He will honour because of His irrevocable promises. Thus, it is not so much that there are now two means to salvation, but rather that God will uphold the original covenant He made with His chosen people. An important implication of this view is that it does "not bring Israel into connection with the Christ of the new covenant for Gentiles at all"[329]. In other words, there will be no forced conversion of the Jewish people. Israel will remain distinct until the end of history, however, according to Davies, Judaism as a nation will then become suppressed within the Christian Church.

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[327] Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", 13.

[328] Ibid., 26.

[329] Ibid., 26.

Paul ultimately upholds the "significance of the Jewish people"[330] by connecting "the historical priority and significance of Israel inextricably to his understanding of the faithfulness of God"[331]. Davies argues that because Paul stresses the irrevocability of God's promises to the Jews and upholds the covenant between God and His chosen people, the Jews are able to remain distinct from the new church. It is difficult to see how this is possible if they are to be absorbed into the Christian church. Davies seems to be focusing on semantic differences.

The question to ask, of course, is: if God does remain faithful to His promises to the Jews, how did the Jews come to reject Jesus? Davies argues that for Paul "the 'punishment' of Israel for her failure to accept Jesus as the Messiah was her self-inflicted exclusion from the true grace of God"[332]. The only way to reconcile this notion of rejection with the belief that the Jews remain "chosen" is if one accepts that they are for a time hardened and rejected. At the end of history they will be saved and welcomed back into the new universalism which Paul perceives as being offered by Christ. In the meantime, because of the

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[330] Ibid., 33.

[331] Ibid., 34.

[332] Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", 37.

irrevocable nature of God's promises they continue as the chosen people of God without recrimination.

This line of discussion leads to the notion that the Jews are receiving a special favour and Davies refers to this as an "ethnic distinction" or dimension. The problem is whether such a distinction or special consideration based on Israel's nationalism challenges Paul's universalism.

3.3.2 Ethnic Dimension in Romans 9-11

There is no doubt that Paul considers the majority of Jews to be unbelieving. Since faith is the condition of salvation, it would appear that there "is no ground for assigning any special place in the future to the Israel nation"[333], and yet Paul did. According to Paul, a remnant has been saved (Rom 9:27 and 11:4) and God is faithful to His promises. It would seem, then, that the Jews are not to be permanently rejected. But if faith in Jesus is the condition for salvation, how is this possible?

Despite the fact that Paul attempts to put the Jews and Gentiles on equal footing (Rom 10:12a), some sense of an ethnic dimension is introduced. This is illustrated in Paul's olive tree analogy. Davies asks if "there (is) in

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[333] W.D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1948), 75.

Paul's Christianity a 'favored nation' clause for Jews?"[334]. By turning to Jesus the Gentiles are now engrafted but the root itself is of Abraham. Paul, argues Davies, "is anxious to insist that always the priority lies with Abraham and the Jewish people"[335]. In fact, the Jewish people are needed by the Gentiles for their salvation.

Harnack had argued that there is indeed an ethnic dimension and it is introduced in Romans 11[336], despite being rejected in Romans 9 and 10. Paul is attempting to affirm that "the people of Israel after the flesh as necessary for the Christian community"[337]. Evidence supporting this point of view is found in Paul's own words when he admonishes the Gentiles not to boast (Rom 11:18). Miles Bourke, on the other hand, argues that there is no ethnic dimension introduced and that Romans 11 must be understood in the context of 9 and 10. He argues that the "olive" is in fact "the community of those who believe 'in Christ' and the root (is) Abraham, the man of faith *par excellence* who was called

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[334] Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", 29.

[335] Ibid.

[336] Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", 31; also A. Harnack, Neue Untersuchungen zur Apostelgeschichte (1911).

[337] Ibid.

when he was a Gentile"[338]. Faith is the only condition for membership in the people of God and thus, he argues, applies equally to Jews and Gentiles. Davies argues that there is no ethnic, racial or national distinction but that the Jews do possess a historical and chronological priority[339]. This of course refers to God's original covenant with the chosen people which both Paul and Davies agree He will uphold. Paul is in a sense "recognis(ing) the significance of the history of the Jewish people"[340]. To them belong the covenant and since the promises of God are irrevocable, this covenant will be upheld. But it is not based on the specific nationality of the Jews but rather on the divine covenant itself.

From this notion however, rises the fear that "Gentile Christians, in the legitimate desire to free themselves of ethnic categories"[341] will fall into anti-Jewish tendencies.

3.3.3 Developing Anti-Jewish Tendencies

Paul understood the new purpose of the Law and Israel in terms of Jesus as Messiah. For Paul, Jesus' role as

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[338] Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", 31.

[339] Ibid., 31.

[340] Ibid., 32.

[341] Ibid., 32.

Messiah was important to his understanding of the relationship between the Jewish and Gentile people. In fact, as Davies puts it, for Paul:

> (f)aith in the Messiah, rather than the observance of the traditional norms of the law, becomes the essential mark of belonging to the people of God[342].

This meant a break from typical Jewish thought because for Paul Jesus was the Messiah. Those who accepted Jesus as Messiah became the 'people of God'. It is important to ask, argues Davies, "since those who believe in Jesus as Messiah... now constitute 'Israel', the people of God, what was the relationship between them and the Jews?"[343]. There was a connection based on their origin but the difference of belief constituted a separation. For many of the Jews, it was impossible to accept the idea of a crucified Messiah: "such a paradoxical Messiah inevitably led to a radical reassessment and criticism of the messianic ideas of the existing religious... order"[344]. But did this break lead to anti-Judaism?

It is important to understand the context in which Paul wrote his letter to the Romans. Paul was attempting to present his understanding of the gospel to a people with

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[342] Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", 5.

[343] Ibid., 5.

[344] Davies, "Paul and the Law", 96.

whom he was unfamiliar. He faced "the opposition of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem"[345] about his preaching to the Gentiles. His mission to the Jews had for the most part failed: the idea that the chosen people of God did not accept His Messiah was a stumbling block for Paul. Finally, Paul faced additional pressure from his belief that the Parousia was fast at hand. Also important to the context of Romans was Paul's emphasis on faith. He begins Romans with: "Ου γαρ επαισχυνομαι το ευαγγελιον, δυναμις γαρ θεου εστιν εις σωτηριαν παντι τῶ πιστευοντι, Ιουδαιῶ τε πρῶτον και Ελληνι·" (Romans 1:16) and "δικαιοσυνη γαρ θεου εν αυτῶ αποκαλυπτεται εκ πιστεῶς εις πιστιν, καθῶς γεγραπται, ο δε δικαιος εκ πιστεῶς ζησεται·" (Romans 1:17). As Davies succinctly puts it, the remainder of Romans "is an exposition of what this means"[346]. From this, one gathers that there are two requirements for becoming a member in the people of God: faith and acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. But does this mean that Paul is anti-semitic? Rosemary Reuthers argues that he is, basing her assertion on her interpretation of Romans 11 which prophesies the disappearance of the Jews into the Christian Church[347]. She

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[345] Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", 13.

[346] Ibid., 13.

[347] Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", 18; also Rosemary Ruether, Faith and Fratricide: The Theological

agrees that Paul's membership conditions mean a radical break but argues that it results in anti-semitic ideals. She says that in:

> Romans 11 it emerges explicitly. There Paul's programme for the future and for Israel's role in it, which leads to ... their absorption by the church, unmasks his anti-semitism[348].

Davies rightly disagrees with such an assessment. He argues that Paul's understanding of Abraham contradicts her interpretation. In Galations 5-6 Paul represents Abraham as both the paradigm of faith and also the progenitor of Israel[349]. In the first, Abraham meets Paul's requirement of faith and in the second Paul connects Abraham's faith with the Jewish people. This seems to counter any idea that Paul was anti-Jewish, even if one could possibly ignore the fact that Paul himself was Jewish.

In fact, Paul understood the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah as an extension of Jewish belief. Davies asserts:

> in accepting the Jew, Jesus, as the Messiah, Paul did not think terms of moving into a new religion but of having found the final expression and intent of the Jewish tradition within which he himself had been born[350].

This completely precludes any notion of anti-semitism on

Roots of Anti-Semitism, New York: Seabury Press, 1974.

[348] Ibid., 18.

[349] Ibid.

[350] Davies, "Paul and the People of Israel", 20.

Paul's part. However, Paul was aware of a growing anti-Jewishness on the part of Gentile Christians[351]. In his analogy of the olive tree he admonishes the Gentile Christians not to boast because they are only engrafted branches (Rom 11:18). They are not the Jewish root nor cultivated branches. He asserts that among the Jews there is saved a remnant within the church. This, according to Davies, " suppli(es) a solid continuity between those 'in Christ' and the Jewish past, (and) root(s) the gospel in Judaism"[352]. When Paul relayed his arguments in Romans 9-11 he refused to follow what seemed to be the logical conclusion; that is, the exclusion of the Jews. He instead upholds the place and importance of the Jews. As a result, 9-11 concludes in a paradox: "in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek and yet a continued place for the Jewish people as such"[353]. Unfortunately the anti-semitism that Paul detected in some of the Gentile Christians did not end there. Davies concludes that "(i)t contributed to a climate which made possible the suffering of the Jews within Christendom across the centuries, and this has culminated in the anti-semitism

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[351] Ibid., 22.

[352] Ibid., 33.

[353] Ibid., 33.

of our time"[354]. Unfortunately this debate on the nationalism and priority of the Jews as the people of God versus the new universality of Christianity has yet to be resolved.

3.3.4 Nationalism versus Universalism

Despite his emphasis on the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah as a condition of membership in the people of God, Paul never hesitated to attribute to the Jews a position of great importance. As discussed earlier, in his olive tree analogy he assigns to the Jewish people in the role of both the root and the cultivated branches. To the Gentiles he assigns the somewhat inferior position of 'engrafted branches'. Paul, according to Davies, understands the olive to represent "the community of Christian believers, the church at first composed of Jewish Christians of the root of Abraham"[355] but the Gentiles were grafted "into or among, not instead of the branches being lopped off"[356]. Paul always maintains that "the priority lies with Abraham and the

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[354] Ibid., 36.

[355] W. D. Davies, "Paul and the Gentiles: A Suggestion Concerning Romans 11:13-24" Jewish and Pauline Studies (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 155.

[356] Ibid., 155.

Jewish people"[357]. In 9:4 Paul enumerates the advantages of being Jewish. He even strives to counteract the idea some Gentile Christians believed: "that the branches which had been broken off, that is, the unbelieving Jews, had suffered this fate by divine purpose in order that the Gentiles might be engrafted into Israel"[358]. But, Davies argues, Paul attributes the Jewish rejection to their own culpability as opposed to divine purpose. Their place however, as the chosen people remains unchanged. Their role in history and in the plan of God also remains unchanged. Paul's letters "reveal a ... conflict between the claims of the old Israel after the flesh and the new Israel after the Spirit, between his 'nationalism' and his Christianity"[359]. It is this idea that he applies to the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. The idea of a universal salvation is not a new one. Jewish tradition long upheld the idea that in order for Gentiles to be saved they must first become Jews, "to be naturalized into the Jewish people"[360]. In fact, argues Davies, within Rabbinic Judaism theories developed to argue "that the Gentiles have been given the same chance as

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[357] Ibid.

[358] Ibid., 156.

[359] Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, 58.

[360] Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, 63.

Israel"[361]. These theories maintained that the Gentiles were in the position they were in due to their own culpability. It is not that unusual that Paul would present his gospel within a similar framework.

Paul perceived that a new universalism had dawned, one that relied on the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. Being 'in Christ' meant that Gentiles no longer had to become Jewish to enter the people of God. As Davies asserts: "in Christ there could be both Jew and Greek... the national principle had been transcended"[362]. And yet, he was able to uphold a position of priority for the Jews.

For Paul, Jesus had preached a new Torah[363] and yet could be loyal to the old one. Davies refers to this as "universalism in belief and particularism in practice"[364]. But because of his ties to both Jewish nationalism and Christian universalism he had to explain the Jewish rejection as the result of something other than divine intervention. As earlier stated, he attributed it to Jewish culpability but was not satisfied to leave it at this because of his loyalty to Israel. He attributes the

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[361] Ibid., 64.

[362] Ibid., 67.

[363] Ibid., 73.

[364] Ibid.

rejection of Jesus to the "purpose of good" and "the plan of God"[365]. Davies argues that the rejection is:

> the means of bringing in the Gentiles; but it does not mean that God has cast off his people... when all the Gentiles are saved then all Israel will be saved[366].

The question which is raised by this, of course, is whether Israel will be able to maintain its nationalism at the end of history when it will be saved. Will Israel be forced to convert to Christianity in order to be saved? Do the "claims of 'nationalism' conflict with those of Christ" [367] with regard to ultimate salvation? In Romans Paul seems to conclude with two contradicting notions. First, the Jews will remain as Jews and thus be saved. Second, "there can be no Jew nor Greek in Christianity"[368], thus removing ethnic dimensions. Paul himself, torn between his nationalism and the universalism of Christian salvation, does not give a coherent or consistent answer.

3.4 E.P. Sanders

E. P. Sanders, too, is concerned with the particularity of Judaism and the universalism of Christianity. But he

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[365] Ibid., 75.

[366] Ibid., 75-6.

[367] Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, 85.

[368] Ibid., 85.

ultimately concludes that because God offers salvation only by faith in Jesus, the Jewish law has been made invalid within Christianity. A student of Davies, Sanders is also concerned with Paul and his relation to Judaism. By examining Paul within his original context he is able to present the way in which Paul emphasised the continuing importance of Judaism as a valid path to God.

Underlying Sanders' interpretation of Romans 9-11 specifically and Paul in general is the question of the faithfulness of God to His promises to Israel. Sanders argues that Paul is struggling to understand and explain a number of dilemmas related to God's faithfulness: If God chose Israel and gave Israel the Law then why would He now require them to be saved as the Gentiles are, by faith[369]; if God's promises are irrevocable, why are they based on a requirement which most of Israel rejects[370]; why did God give the law to Israel but then reveal that righteousness comes only through Christ[371]; and finally, if the Law was bestowed by God why did it not work[372]? Ultimately, with every

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[369] E. P. Sanders, Paul (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 118.

[370] E. P. Sanders, Paul, the Law and the Jewish People (PLJP) (Britain: SCM Press, 1983), 198.

[371] Ibid., 73.

[372] Ibid., 85.

question Paul, and thus Sanders, is trying to reconcile God's promises to Israel with the promise of salvation to those who have faith in Christ. Sanders bases his interpretation on the question of whether God is just and faithful to both the Jews and the Gentiles.

Sanders', like Paul's, line of argument follows a specific pattern. Paul begins with the premise that God is indeed faithful and Israel was elected by God to be His chosen people. Paul argues that Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah and was thus itself rejected. Both Paul and Sanders argue that there are now two dispensations for salvation, the Law and the gospel. However, Sanders adamantly opposes the notion that there are two covenants leading to salvation. He argues that Paul concedes that two dispensations exist but that only one, the gospel, remains valid. Paul's 'mystery' reference in Romans 11:25 suggests, however, that there may be external factors concerning the salvation of Israel apart from Christ. As a result of this new dispensation the eschatological scheme has been reversed and salvation is offered to the Gentiles first and then the Jews. One implication of this is that it challenges the original priority of the 'chosen people'. Finally, Paul argues that in the plan of God Israel's election and culpable exclusivism are part of His offered salvation. Sanders goes one step further; he argues that Jewish

salvation could never happen apart from Christ.

3.4.1 Faithfulness of God

As stated earlier, Paul begins with the premise that God is faithful and thus everything that happens is according to His plan. Sanders asserts that:

> one of Paul's major and unquestioned assumptions, an assumption common to Jews, was that God controls history and that consequently whatever happens accords with his will[373].

Israel was elected and established as the chosen people of God. If God has an unchanging will, then it is difficult to reconcile His offering of the Law as a means of righteousness with His new offering of salvation 'in Christ'. Sanders argues that "the election of Israel however, called God's consistency of purpose even more into question"[374]. It raised questions about the function of the Law and the status of Israel now that the Gentiles have been offered salvation apart from the Law. Sanders asserts that such doubts lead to theodicy, doubts about God's constancy[375] and it was against this that Paul argued. If the Law was meant to offer righteousness but is now unable to because of the Gospel, then the question is: did God change His mind or

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[373] Sanders, Paul, 91.

[374] Sanders, Paul, 118.

[375] Ibid.

make a mistake? Paul hints at the justice of God several times; and in 9:6 he asserts that the word of God has not failed. He also admonishes his followers not to question their creator (Rom 9:20). But as Sanders argues, Paul really does not say a lot in defense of God's constancy:

> on the question of God's justice, he has little to say and one is almost embarrassed on his behalf. He proposes that the pot may not criticise the potter and similarly humans may not object to God[376].

It would seem then that Paul recognizes the dilemma and the difficulty of resolving it. But he refused to ignore the fact that Israel was indeed elected.

3.4.2 The Election of Israel

Sanders maintains that the "two pillars of common Judaism were the election of Israel and the giving of the Law"[377]. For the Jews the two were intertwined. Despite Paul's belief in a second and new dispensation he never quite surrenders the view that the Jews have priority in God's plan. However, he is faced with two apparently contradicting convictions: God made promises to Israel through the Law, and salvation is now by faith only. Paul is in essence challenging the election of Israel. When Paul

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[376] Ibid., 119.

[377] Sanders, Paul, 84.

appeals to the Abrahamic covenant, for instance, it is not to uphold Israel's priority. Instead, he argues that the "covenant 'skips' from Abraham to Christ, and now includes those in Christ, but not Jews by descent (and this) is in fact a flat denial of the election of Israel"[378]. Paul is appropriating Jewish history and tradition to support the new dispensation. With Christ and the gospel, argues Sanders, faith becomes the entry requirement into the "people of God"[379].

Paul is denying the pillars of Judaism by emphasising the new equality between Jews and Gentiles and by stressing that faith in Christ is the only means to salvation. Sanders argues that "Paul seems to ignore (and by implication deny) the grace of God toward Israel as evidenced by the election and the covenant"[380]. Since faith in Christ is now the only means to salvation, the Law and the covenant are ineffective "thus consequently denying the basis of Judaism"[381]. Paul even appropriates the descendants of Abraham for his new 'people of God'. The "covenantal promises to Abraham (no longer) apply to his descendants but

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[378] Sanders, PLJP, 207.

[379] Ibid., 208.

[380] E.P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism (PPJ) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 551.

[381] Sanders, PPJ, 551.

to Christians"[382]. The new universalism challenges the 'chosen' status of Israel and the connection of Abraham to the Christians manages to bypass hundreds of years of Jewish tradition, thus replacing the Jews with Christians. While Paul stresses that Jews and Greeks are equal in God's salvation, many of the Jews rejected Christ and the gospel, choosing instead to uphold the old dispensation of Law as opposed to the new dispensation of Christ and the gospel.

3.4.3 Two Dispensations: Law and Gospel

According to Sanders, Paul's fundamental theological problem was "how to hold together the two dispensations, one being God's election of Israel and his gift to them of the law, the other his offer of salvation to all who have faith in Christ"[383]. But with the appearance of Christ, faith became the sole means to salvation thus usurping the status of the Law. The requirement of faith was offered to Jew and Gentile alike ,however, it did not take into consideration Jewish reliance on the Law. Faith in Christ was required, not just in God. When the majority of Israel did not accept Jesus as Messiah, Paul "accused Israel of choosing the wrong

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[382] Ibid.

[383] Sanders, Paul, 117.

(dispensation)"[384]. The question arising from the existence of two dispensations is whether there are, as well, two covenants, one for the Jews and one for the Gentiles.

Sanders maintains that the idea of a "two-covenant theology" arose as a result of the Jewish-Christian dialogue[385]. It would appear to be an attempt to uphold the priority of Israel and their Law with the gospel for the Christians without denigrating either faith. Franz Mussner argues that Romans 10:4 is proof that the law is ended only "for the righteousness of those who have faith in Christ but not for Jews, who can still come to righteousness through the law"[386]. Stendahl argues that "the meaning of Rom 11:25f is that Israel will be saved apart from faith in Christ"[387]. But Sanders disagrees. Paul argues that the Jews will be moved to jealousy by the Gentile mission and come to emulate it (11:14). Sanders argues that this "connection with the Gentile mission shows that the salvation of Israel does not

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[384] Ibid., 120.

[385] Sanders, PLJP, 193.

[386] Sanders, PLJP, 193; also refer to Franz Mussner, *'Cristus [ist] des Gesetzes Ende zur Gerechtigkeit fur jeden, der glaubt [Rom. 10,4]'*,Paulus- Apostat oder Apostel ,Regensburg, 1977).

[387] Ibid., 193; also Stendahl, Paul among Jews and Gentiles, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.

take place apart from Christ"[388]. As well, Paul connects faith "exclusively with Christ"[389]. Sanders asserts that the "fact that the Jews 'did not submit to God's righteousness' is grounded by the statement that 'Christ is the end of the law'"[390]. Christ, for Paul, is the culmination of God's plan and salvation is possible only through faith in Christ.

The old dispensation is the Jewish Law and covenant and Sanders' interpretation of Paul and the Law is grounded in the concern for the faithfulness of God. Paul's statements on the Law are not entirely consistent. At times, the Law is holy and just (Rom 7:12); at other times it is connected with sin and death. It is important to acknowledge that Paul's discussions on the Law were often a result of specific circumstances. He did not have "one single theology of the law"[391]. However, Sanders argues, paul assigns the law primarily a negative role in God's salvation. Sanders elaborates: "(The Law) produces sin, so that salvation would be on the basis of faith"[392]. By doing so, Paul is able to keep the Law as part of salvation

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[388] Ibid., 194.

[389] Ibid., 41.

[390] Ibid.

[391] Sanders, Paul, 84.

[392] Sanders, PLJP, 73.

instead of banishing it entirely. But the role it plays for Paul is totally unlike its role for the Jewish people.

Paul's old view of the Law, according to Sanders was that: "it had potentially offered life: those who were loyal to it would be saved"[393]. His view changes with the appearance of Christ: "life (now) came to those who died in Christ"[394]. The result of this shift is that if "God intended all humanity to be saved by faith in Christ, it had to follow that he had not intended to save people by giving the law"[395]. Thus it was, according to Paul, part of God's plan that the Law be abrogated. As Sanders puts it, "if the law condemns, God gave it in order that he might subsequently save on the basis of faith"[396]. Up to this point, it is evident that Sanders is arguing that the Law was replaced by the gospel but not why it was unable to save.

By placing the Jew and Gentile on equal footing, Paul removed the Law as an entry requirement into the "people of God"[397]. Faith was now the only means to salvation;

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[393] Sanders, Paul, 85.

[394] Ibid., 85.

[395] Ibid., 86.

[396] Sanders, PLJP, 85.

[397] Sanders, Paul, 66.

specifically faith in Christ. The typical Protestant interpretation, most evident in Luther, maintains that Paul accuses his fellow Jews of self-righteousness based on the Law"[398]. By this Sanders argues, many "suppose that ... each and every Jew tried and failed to reach righteousness by works"[399]. But this would then apply also to Paul and his followers. Paul is not so much opposed to following the Law but rather objects to a legalistic means of observing it. When Paul speaks of Israel and self-righteousness he is not referring to individual Jews but rather to Israel as a nation. Paul believed that Israel was clinging to the old dispensation at the expense of the new one.

Within the new dispensation of the gospel there exists a new means of attaining righteousness: by faith. Sometimes Paul becomes zealous in his attempt to explain this. According to Sanders, he "sometimes sounds as if the (Jewish Law) is the polar opposite of the new revelation in Christ"[400]. Paul defines faith not merely as the "general attitude of trusting God, but the specific commitment to Christ"[401]. For Paul, works of the Law are an inadequate

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[398] Ibid., 120; 9:32; 10:3; 11:6.

[399] Ibid.

[400] Ibid., 84.

[401] Ibid., 117.

means to attaining righteousness. The Law cannot redeem (Gal 3:11-12), cannot lead to righteousness (Rom 9:32), cannot set one free from death (Rom 8:3). According to Sanders, righteousness is a "word indicating the fundamental change from death to life"[402], a complete transformation from the old aeon to the new. But any who continued to uphold the Law would be excluded from salvation in Christ. Paul is not saying that the "fact that the Messiah has come is the reason for holding the law invalid"[403], but rather that to uphold the Law is futile because it cannot make alive whereas Christ can.

The process by which Christ saves the believer, for Paul, is described by Sanders, as 'participation in Christ'. In Romans, Paul often connects Law with sin (6:1), flesh (7:5) and death (6:14). Since all of humanity is in a condemned state (Rom 5), a transformation is needed. That process is enacted by Christ, Paul argues. By participating 'in Christ'[404], in his death and resurrection, "one dies to the power of sin"[405]. According to Sanders, by dying 'in

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[402] E.P. Sanders, "Patterns of Religion in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: A Holistic Method of Comparison", HTR (66) 1973, 472.

[403] Sanders, PPJ, 479-80.

[404] Sanders, "Patterns", 467.

[405] Sanders, PPJ, 465.

Christ' one is delivered from the old aeon which Paul connects to sin. Sanders argues that:

> the purpose of Christ's death was not simply to provide expiation but that he might become Lord and thus save those who belong to him and die 'in' him[406].

Paul argues that this is how one now reaches salvation and thus the Law is no longer valid. The apparent result of this is that the Gentiles are to be offered salvation and the Jews rejected.

3.4.4 Reversal of Eschatological Scheme

It is probably to be expected that Paul in Romans would reverse the eschatological scheme of salvation. He begins Romans by describing the solution to humanity's plight, a saviour[407], and then describing the plight itself, with chapters 9-11 specifically concerned with the Jewish plight. Paul believed that God had indeed provided a saviour in Jesus. Sanders argues that:

> it appears that the conclusion that all the world- both Jew and Greek- equally stands in need of a saviour springs from the prior conviction that God had provided such a saviour[408].

This reversal of thought is reflected in Paul's analysis of

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[406] Ibid., 465.

[407] Sanders, PPJ, 443.

[408] Ibid., 443.

the eschatological scheme of salvation in Romans. In Romans 11 Paul introduces a reversal of sequence in two places: 11:25-6 and 11:30-31 in which the Gentiles are saved first and then the Jews. In the Jewish messianic framework it was expected that the Gentiles would have to convert to Judaism in order to be saved, but now this framework is reversed by Paul. Sanders asserts that:

> Gentiles who enter the people of God do not, after all, in Paul's view, join Israel according to the flesh. It is not the case that Israel is established and that the Gentiles are admitted to it on (Jewish) terms[409].

In fact, not only have the terms changed but now they also apply to the Jewish people: "Righteousness is by faith in Jesus Christ and not by works of law whether one is Jewish or Gentile"[410]. Israel will now be saved as a result of the Gentile mission, not vice versa.

3.4.5 Salvation of Jews and Gentiles

Underlying Paul's theology and specifically Romans 9-11, is his conviction that "Jesus Christ is Lord, that in him God has provided for the salvation of all who believe and that he will soon return to bring all things to an

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[409] Sanders, PLJP, 172.

[410] Ibid., 172.

end"[411]. Paul also believed that the parousia was imminent. Despite this he still believed that the Jews had been specially elected. But the Jews were rejected. The realization that the chosen people would reject the Messiah sent to them by God was a struggle for Paul to understand.

Their main fault, according to Paul was their lack of faith in Jesus as Messiah. Because Paul believed in God's divine authority, he "attributes the non-inclusion of part of Israel to God's predestination"[412]. God foresaw their disbelief and hardened them. But if Paul were to make God solely responsible for the unbelief of the Jewish people, he would challenge God's constancy. So Paul introduces the element of Jewish culpability. To begin with, the Jews continued to cling to the first dispensation and "did not see that God had offered another"[413]. A second mistake is that "Israel sought (its) goal not by faith but by works: they stumbled on the stumbling stone which God ... placed in Zion"[414]. As a result, God turned to the Gentiles and offered His mercy. Paul himself redefines Israel so that not all who are descended from Israel belong to it (9:6-8).

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[411] Sanders, PPJ, 441-2.

[412] Sanders, Paul, 119.

[413] Sanders, Paul, 121.

[414] Sanders, PLJP, 37.

The strongest criticism levelled at the Jews by Paul is their exclusivism. Sanders argues that "God had called Israel to be a people apart and they had obeyed. But the present generation of Jews do not perceive that Christ has brought an end to that epoch"[415]. The self-righteousness that the Jews continued to strive for was available only to followers of the Law[416]. Paul responds to this with his own theology of universalism. Sanders argues that "in denying Jewish privilege as the elect of God, Paul makes the Church in theory universal; it is God's intention to have mercy on all[417]. Unfortunately, this resulted in exclusivism too. Only those with faith in Jesus were admitted to this new 'people of God'.

Paul believed, however, that God had included in His plan the salvation of the Jews, but it was to be as a result of the Gentile mission. In Romans 11 (11-14) Paul maintains that the Jews will be saved after being provoked to jealousy by Gentile salvation. He even assigns the culpability of the Jews a role in God's plan; their disobedience meant that salvation could now be offered as well to the Gentiles. Sanders argues that "God is still in charge and the

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[415] Sanders, Paul, 122.

[416] Sanders, PLJP, 38.

[417] Ibid., 208.

disobedience of the Jews... is for a purpose. It has allowed time for the mission of the Gentiles"[418]. As a result, God will then turn his mercy toward the Jews.

Paul maintains in Romans (11:26) that all Israel will be saved, leaving open to interpretation whether or not it will be by Christ. But Sanders has made it clear that:

> (Paul's) hope for Israel is that they will be saved, but he states with emphasis that faith is the only ground of salvation: faith in Christ, which is available to all without distinction (10:11-13) and which excludes the law as a way to 'righteousness'[419].

This leaves little room for a Jewish salvation apart from Christ.

Krister Stendahl, on the other hand, points out that Paul never explicitly claims that the salvation of the Jews will be through faith in Jesus. He argues that it is indeed a relevant interpretation of Romans 11 to suggest that God has reserved a special means of salvation for the Jews. It is upon Stendahl's argument that I base my thesis that Paul, in Romans 9-11, did not require conversion for the Jews to Christianity.

3.5 Krister Stendahl

Krister Stendahl stresses the relation between the Jews

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[418] Sanders, Paul, 123.

[419] Sanders, PLJP, 42.

and the Gentiles in Paul and Romans 9-11. Paul's mission, he argues, was guided by a need to justify the mission to the Gentiles and to define how the Gentiles fit into the plan and 'people' of God. While Stendahl agrees that 'justification by faith' is described in Romans, he argues that its correct meaning has been misinterpreted. Instead of being the answer to a plagued conscience, justification by faith is the argument by which Paul defends his Gentile mission. He bases his argument on Genesis 15 in which Abraham was reckoned righteous because of his faith, before the Law and the covenant.

Stendahl also recognizes a reversal in the eschatological scheme of salvation in Romans with the development of the new dispensation; salvation is now offered to the Gentile first, but Stendahl argues that God has reserved a special salvation for the Jews which may occur apart from Christ. Stendahl focuses more on preserving the importance of the Jews than in assigning culpability to them. As a result of the new dispensation, the Law no longer saves. This understanding of the Law, however, became in essence a misunderstanding of Paul. Luther perceived justification by faith as the answer to a plagued conscience. The result was the reduction of the Law's previous importance and the misrepresentation of justification by faith, which Paul had originally intended

as a defense of the Gentile people.

3.5.1 Paul's mission: The Herald of a New Dispensation

In the letter to the Romans, Paul defends his mission to the Gentile people and explains how exactly they fit into God's divine plan[420]. Stendahl asserts that:

> (Paul) is not teaching, he is not instructing. The letter is an account of his mission... a kind of apology for or explanation of how he sees his own mission, which God has given him to carry out as the apostle to the Gentiles[421].

The letter in its entirety is an explanation and defense of his Gentile mission but in chapters 9-11 he attempts to relate the Gentile mission to the Jewish people[422]. Paul was introducing his mission and theology to the church in Rome in order to explain "how his mission fits into God's total plan and scheme"[423]. The salvation of the Gentiles and indeed their right to be saved was central to Paul.

Part of Paul's mission was to defend the new dispensation which was being offered in Jesus. Stendahl

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[420] Krister Stendahl, Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), ix.

[421] Krister Stendahl, "A Particular Letter and Sin Universal: Romans 1:1-3:20 and 15", Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans,12.

[422] Ibid.,

[423] Krister Stendahl, Paul Among Jews and Gentiles, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 3.

describes it as the "sense that since it is linked to Christ, there is no *diastole* (distinction), no *prospolempsia* (partiality). All are treated alike"[424]. This new dispensation was the offer of salvation through belief 'in Christ', in his life, death and resurrection. Stendahl argues that "it is important for Paul that not only he, but others accept this new dispensation, this new *diatheke*"[425], which of course, was at the heart of Paul's mission. The Law for Paul belonged to the old dispensation; it was no longer a valid alternative to the attainment of salvation. Stendahl argues that "the only *metanoia* (repentance/conversion) and the only grace which counts is the one now available in Messiah Jesus"[426]. This grace was based on faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

3.5.2 Paul's Exegetical Find: Genesis 15

In the course of Paul's defense not only of the mission

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[424] Krister Stendahl, "Paul's Exegetical Find, Its Consequences and Limits- The By-Passing of Moses and the Macro/Micro Distinction. Romans 3:21-8:39", Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans, 12.

[425] Krister Stendahl, "Missiological Reflections by a Former Zealot: Romans 9-11", Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans, 35.

[426] Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West", Paul among Jews and Gentiles, 31.

to the Gentiles but also their acceptance into the people of God, he turned to the passage about Abraham in Genesis 15: "And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen 15:6). In this passage, Abraham is considered righteous by God because of his faith. Paul realizes that this righteousness by faith precedes both the giving of the Law and the covenant, with its membership requirement: circumcision. Stendahl argues that:

> With it (Paul) had a proof text for the calling he had received to run the Gentile mission. Under no circumstances did the Gentiles need to join with Israel by conversion in order to be part of the consummation, the salvation and the age to come[427].

For Paul there now existed a defense of Gentile salvation apart from the Law: they could enter by faith. It proved to Paul, Stendahl argues, that "this faith that actually establishes the right salvation was given to Abraham when he was a Gentile"[428]. It is interesting to note that while Paul has discovered a way in which the Gentiles may approach salvation, he does not say that the Jews may no longer approach it by Law.

3.5.3 Justification By Faith: Defending the Gentiles

Luther perceived justification by faith to be the

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[427] Stendahl, Final Account, 4.

[428] Stendahl, "Paul's Exegetical Find", 25.

answer to his prayers, or at the very least, the answer to his plagued conscience. Long convinced that works do not justify nor garner salvation, and thus that humanity can do nothing on its own to merit grace, Luther saw justification by faith as the solution. Paul, Luther argues, understood that the Law could not save and works could not save; in fact no human intervention brings grace, it could only occur by justification by faith. Stendahl, with his focus on Gentile-Jewish relations, understood justification by faith to mean something quite different.

Stendahl argues that Paul uses justification by faith "as an argument for the status of (his) Gentile converts on the model of Abraham (Romans 4)"[429]. Paul was in fact "defending the right of the Gentile to be included in the people of God"[430]. Paul, argues Stendahl, bases his defense on his exegetical find: that Abraham was reckoned righteous by faith before the covenant and the Law. In Romans, Paul is attempting to explain how the Gentiles could become members of the 'people of God' apart from the Law. He bases their acceptance on the model of Abraham. The Gentiles too could approach salvation by faith, apart from the Jewish Law. By doing so, Paul has offered to the Gentiles "a way

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[429] Stendahl, Final Account, ix.

[430] Ibid., 4.

of access that makes Jews and Gentiles equal"[431]. He has also established a connection between the Gentiles and the Jews: the Jews are descended from Abraham and the Gentiles are admitted to the people of God because of their faith, as was Abraham, before the giving of the Law.

Stendahl argues that it was never Paul's intention to produce a "theological tractate in the nature of justification by faith"[432]. But it became understood that way: "Justification no longer 'justified' the status of Gentile Christians as honourary Jews but became the timeless answer to the plight and pains of the introspective conscience of the West"[433]. Luther, in particular, came to see "justification by faith without the works of the law" as the theme of Romans[434]. It, in a sense, removed human endeavouring from the equation. One no longer needs to struggle to achieve or earn grace because it was a gift. But Luther puts more emphasis on this point than Paul originally meant it to have.

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[431] Stendahl, "Paul's Exegetical Find", 23.

[432] Stendahl, Paul Among Jews and Gentiles, 3.

[433] Ibid.,5.

[434] Stendahl, "A Particular Letter", 10.

3.5.4 Justification and Defense: Implications of Interpretation

Romans 7:15 was understood by Luther as a proof text for his interpretation of justification by faith. Paul says:

> I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me (Romans 7:15-17).

Luther saw this as reflecting his own plagued conscience. Stendahl, however, interprets this passage to mean: "I rejoice in the law, I with my true ego, serve the law of God. But in the flesh is the law of sin"[435], an interpretation problematic in its own right. But he is correct when he argues that there is "no morose feeling of guilt in this chapter"[436]. Indeed, only a few lines before Paul emphatically declares that "the law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good" (Romans 7:12). Paul, Stendahl asserts, is not discussing a plagued conscience but rather is elaborating on the "realization that dirty sin has mixed into the system"[437]. The Law itself was holy and good but since sin affected its ability to bring salvation, it

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[435] Stendahl, "Paul's Exegetical Find", 29.

[436] Ibid.

[437] Ibid.

was rendered invalid. There was needed a means to salvation which could not be corrupted by sin.

Luther and other proponents of the introspective conscience interpretation have "hailed (justification by faith) as the answer to the problem which faces the 'honest man in introspection'"[438]. But Luther interpreted Paul in light of his own plagued conscience and piety. In Luther, Stendahl asserts, "we find the problem of late, medieval piety and theology. Luther's inner struggles presuppose the developing system of penance and indulgences"[439]. Luther strived to answer the question: "How can I find a gracious God?" and he understands 'justification by faith' without works in Paul to be a "liberating and saving answer"[440].

Luther's interpretation is problematic in light of Paul's defense of the Gentile mission. Paul's argument that Gentiles enter the 'people of God' by faith has become "all (people) must come to Christ with the conscience properly convicted by the law"[441]. But this interpretation is difficult to reconcile with Paul's positive statements about the Law. Paul never claims that one must be 'convicted' by

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[438] Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul", 79.

[439] Ibid., 82.

[440] Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul", 83.

[441] Ibid., 87.

the Law or that one's conscience must be affected. It is important to remember that Paul's discussion of the Law takes place in the context of the old and new dispensation. One is better than the other, but not because the Law was meant to destroy one's conscience but because grace is not corruptible by sin.

In fact it is difficult to reconcile this notion with Paul at all. Paul, Stendahl argues, had a robust conscience. According to Philippians 3:6 he considered himself blameless under the Law. His encounter with Jesus (Acts 9:1-9) did not appear to disturb his conscience negatively in the least"[442], but rather strengthens his resolve to forward his mission. The aspect of forgiveness, so important to Western Christianity and the introspective conscience is absent in Paul. However in Paul's letters "the word 'forgiveness' (*aphesis*) and the verb 'to forgive' are spectacularly absent"[443]. The phrase "*simul justus et peccator*" (at the same time righteous and a sinner), has often been considered an apt description of Paul, yet it contradicts "Paul's conscious attitude toward his personal sins"[444]. Finally, in all of Paul's teaching about the

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[442] Ibid., 80.

[443] Ibid., 23.

[444] Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul", 82.

benefits of faith in Jesus, Paul never "urges Jews to find in Christ the answer to the anguish of a plagued conscience"[445]. Instead, faith in Christ leads to salvation for the believer.

While justification by faith was to be the manner in which Gentiles were to approach Jesus, Stendahl suggests that Paul had something different in mind for the Jews.

3.5.5 The Salvation of Israel

Stendahl offers several reasons for the Jewish rejection. He argues first that they did not respond to the Messiah[446], with faith, and thus, they did not accept Jesus as Messiah. But Stendahl offers some reasons for that:

> The coming in of the Gentiles by means of Paul's mission did not seem to strike Israel as a strong sign of the eschaton, the restoration of the coming age[447].

In other words, they heard and understood Paul's mission but did not believe it heralded the beginning of the new age. The Jews criticised the Gentiles because they claimed "that the kingdom has come, but it doesn't look that way"[448]. Paul responds that it has not yet come but "it is available in

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[445] Ibid., 81.

[446] Stendahl, Final Account, 1.

[447] Ibid.

[448] Stendahl, "Missiological Reflections", 37.

Jesus"[449]. Despite their failure to believe, Stendahl agrees with Paul that the Jews have not fallen. Indeed, he assigns to their unbelief a role in God's plan of salvation: "by their transgression there is salvation for the Gentiles... Had the Jews not said 'no', (the Gentiles) would not have the opportunity to get in on the deal"[450]. In this way, he connects the Gentile salvation with the Jewish salvation. For Sanders though, it will be recalled, this connection meant that salvation for the Jews could not occur apart from Christ.

As a result of Israel's unbelief there was a reversal of the eschatological scheme of salvation. Stendahl argues that Paul concludes: "God changed something. Israel did not stumble but they were to step aside temporarily. In the meantime, the Gentiles would enter the 'people of God'"[451]. The reversal meant that salvation was now offered first to the Gentiles and then to the Jews. But this does not mean that the Gentiles replaced the Jews. Stendahl argues that Paul:

> reminds (the Gentiles) that they are newcomers. They have been engrafted... He perceives in the Gentile community a quite obvious haughtiness, a conceit, a lack of concern that he is trying to

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[449] Ibid.

[450] Ibid., 36.

[451] Stendahl, Final Account, 6.

combat[452].

The point is that God changed his plans. The Jewish unbelief meant that the Gentiles were offered a place in God's salvation, but it did not mean that the Jews were replaced as the people of God. God is faithful to his promises. Despite their temporary hardening, the Jews remain 'chosen'. Even Paul in his anguish recognizes this when he tells the Gentiles not to boast over the Jews. To them, he says, belongs the root, in a sense, the very foundation of God's church.

Paul's teaching about the salvation of Israel is connected to God's faithfulness. God made promises to the Jewish people and offered them the Law. Now they are told that the only path to salvation is through faith in Jesus, a condition most refuse to accept. The question is: is God faithful to his original promises or must Israel come to salvation through Jesus only? Paul prepares to answer this question by demonstrating both God's absolute power and His arbitrary decisions. Stendahl argues that Paul "seeks other examples where God's freedom strikes us as odd- the choice of Jacob instead of Esau, the use of Pharaoh, the metaphors of the potter and the pot"[453]. In each case, God makes a

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[452] Stendahl, "Missiological Reflections", 37.

[453] Stendahl, Final Account, 5-6.

choice or uses a person to fulfil a specific purpose not easily understood by us. He demonstrates that God can choose or elect whomever He pleases at any time for any reason. Unfortunately, this is not a strong argument for the defense of His faithfulness to the Jews. But does this mean that the Jewish path to salvation by Law has been rendered invalid?

Stendahl discusses the possibility of a two-covenant theory of salvation: one for the Jews and one for Gentiles[454]. But he argues that this is not demonstrated in Paul's letter to the Romans. He does say, however, that God has reserved some special means of salvation for the Jews and this is why the "urge to convert Israel is held in check"[455]. Paul did not even consider himself a convert from one faith to another, and in fact, Paul never claims that the Jews will ever accept Jesus as Messiah; only that they will be saved. Stendahl argues that Paul never says that "when the... consummation comes, Israel will accept Jesus as the Messiah. He says only that the time will come when 'all Israel will be saved'"[456]. Stendahl believes that as a result, God has willed a "co-existence between Judaism and

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[454] Ibid., x.

[455] Stendahl, Paul Among Jews and Gentiles, x.

[456] Ibid., 4.

Christianity"[457], which will last until the end of this age. Even when Paul discusses Israel's salvation in Romans 11, he connects it to a mysterious Redeemer, whom he does not explicitly claim is Jesus. Ultimately, Stendahl agrees with Paul that God is faithful to His promises:

> The Jews are in the hands of God, and the promises of God are irreversible... God might repent of his plans of judgement, but the never repents of his plans of mercy[458].

In other words, God made His covenant with Israel and since His promises are irrevocable, He will uphold that covenant. Jewish salvation will not be by faith in Jesus unless they choose to believe.

3.6 Summation

This chapter, more than the first, considers the salvation of Israel within the context of God's faithfulness to His promises to the Jews and the Christian dispensation by faith. Each of the five scholars, Sanday and Headlam, Davies, Sanders and Stendahl, agree with Paul that all of Israel will be saved and that God is faithful to His promises. But each scholar struggles to reconcile the two contradicting premises: God's faithfulness to the Jews through the Law and Christian universalism. The first four

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[457] Ibid.

[458] Stendahl, "Missiological Reflections", 40.

scholars argue for a Jewish salvation requiring the conversion to Christianity, but Stendahl suggests an alternative: a Jewish salvation in which God remains faithful to His promises to Israel and which does not require a conversion to Christianity. This would not challenge the Christian dispensation by faith since it would still be available to any who choose to accept Jesus as Messiah.

Sanday and Headlam's interpretation asks the right questions but faces some difficulties. They struggle to maintain the absolute authority of God to the point that it overrides free will, thus removing the culpability they assign to the Jewish people for their rejection. They argue that it was Jewish culpability which broke the covenant and yet they argue that God's grace is bestowed without the aid of human intervention. But if everything is attributed solely to God's will and He elects those upon whom He will bestow grace, then can the Jews be held culpable in their own rejection? Sanday and Headlam also do not delve sufficiently into the importance of faith in Pauline theology. Their emphasis on the absolute power of God reflects Paul's, yet Paul does not understand God to act arbitrarily. Being "grafted in" rests more on personal faith than on God's power.

W. D. Davies, on the other hand, recognizes a very

important point: if God's plan were to establish Jesus as Messiah, and His own people rejected it, then Paul's mission to the Gentiles is threatened. It brings into question the faithfulness of God. The most interesting contribution of Davies to the discussion on Romans 9-11 is his discussion of an ethnic dimension for Israel's salvation. Davies disagrees that the salvation of the Jews is based on an ethnic distinction, but rather argues that it rests on a historical priority: God will remain faithful to His original covenant with Israel. Davies also examines the Jewish question within its own context in order to discuss anti-Jewish tendencies in Paul. He ultimately concludes that anti-semitism did not have its origin in Paul. Paul, in Romans 9-11, attributes to the Jews an important role in God's plan.

E. P. Sanders also discusses Jewish idenity in the context of the new Christian dispensation. In Sanders' discussion, more than in any other, the two elements are most juxtaposed. We began our discussion of Sanders with a number of dilemmas with which Paul struggled in light of the new dispensation, such as the function of the Law and the conversion of the Jews. While Sanders asserts that God is faithful, he argues that Paul in struggling to defend this point, denies the election of Israel as God's chosen people. When Paul demonstrates Jewish and Gentile equality and when

he argues that faith in Jesus is the only means to salvation, he is denying both the Jewish election and the importance of the Law. Faith, not Law, becomes the entry requirement into the 'people of God'. Sanders also contributes to the discussion by demonstrating what he thinks Paul meant by salvation by faith in Christ; or what Sanders refers to as 'participation in Christ'. By doing so, one dies to sin while upholding the Law leads to sin. Sanders also attributes to the Jews the act of exclusivism: they were rejected because they strived for a righteousness available only to followers of the Law. Ultimately, Sanders concludes that Jewish salvation does not occur apart from faith in Jesus.

Stendahl, on the other hand, interprets Paul differently. He argues that God has reserved a special means of salvation for the Jews based on the original covenant which He made with them. Stendahl also examines the problems which resulted from Luther's misinterpretation of 'justification by faith'. Paul was attempting, in justification by faith, to defend the Gentile mission apart from the Law, while Luther understood it as the solution to a plagued conscience: grace is bestowed as a gift, not as the result of human endeavouring. Stendahl's interpretation of Romans 9-11 stresses the importance of faith for Paul. Faith became, for Paul, the requirement for the new

dispensation and he based it on the faith of Abraham in Genesis 15. By doing this Paul established a connection between the Jewish and Gentile people: Abraham was the progenitor of the Jewish people and yet it was by his faith that the Gentiles were to be admitted to the 'people of God'.

In these two chapters, several components of Jewish salvation have constantly been introduced: the faithfulness of God to His promises to Israel; the potential conversion of Israel to Christianity; the salvation of Israel apart from Christ. For the most part, the scholars we have examined maintain that with the development of the new dispensation in Christ, Jewish salvation does not occur apart from Christ. Stendahl, on the other hand, suggests that that may not be the case. In the next chapter, we will discuss the salvation of Israel regarding each of these components. We will attempt to determine if any supporting evidence exists in Romans 9-11 for each particular component and determine which one is the most applicable.

4.0 THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL

In this chapter, I focus specifically on the salvation of Israel. After having examined and analyzed both classical and modern interpreters and their conclusions, I intend to now focus primarily on the text itself in order to determine what Paul's arguments are. The question at the heart of this chapter is whether God can be faithful to His promises to Israel while offering a new dispensation in the form of Jesus as Messiah. What does the appearance of Jesus mean to the Jews who choose not to accept him as Messiah? More to the point, how does it affect Paul's understanding of Jewish salvation?

Among modern interpretations emerge three schools of thought. The first I will refer to as the 'conversion theory' or the 'conversion position'. This position argues that God's faithfulness is fulfilled by Christ and as such Judaism is superseded or replaced by the gospel and Christianity. This position stresses that God is faithful to the Jews through Christ and that a rejection of Jesus as the Messiah is a rejection of God's promises. In this case, conversion for the Jews to Christianity is a requirement. This stance has the most support among Pauline interpreters as well as a long history. From Chrysostom and Augustine

onward, Judaism has been relegated to the past, the Law is abrogated and Yahweh's covenant is fulfilled in Christ. It is certainly the case that Paul's own words seem to support the conversion theory: his hostility toward the Law, his emphasis on Jewish guilt and his juxtaposition of faith and Law. The consequences of such a position, however, does a grave injustice to the Jewish religion and perhaps even denies the validity of Israel's covenant with Yahweh. Such an attitude of supersessionism is a dangerous one since it can, and at times has, led to anti-semitism.

The second theory of salvation which I intend to examine is the non-conversion or dual-covenant theory. In this position, God's faithfulness upholds the election of Israel but does not require a conversion in the present or future age to Christianity. According to this theory, there have always been two separate paths to salvation, one for the Jews by the covenant and one for the Christians by the gospel. The Jews are saved by God's grace and their faith in His purpose and the Christians are saved by Jesus. When the Jews are accused of failure, it is because many chose not to accept that God is now offering salvation to the Christians apart from the Torah. This position is an appealing one because it upholds the validity of Judaism and its beliefs and yet provides a means of salvation to the Gentiles. Despite its evident appeal, however, it is

difficult to reconcile this stance with the actual words of Paul.

The third position or theory of Jewish salvation is the '*Sonderweg*', or special means of salvation for Israel as enacted by God himself. This position upholds both the faithfulness of God to the Jews and the new universalism of His gospel through Jesus as Messiah. Like the non-conversion position, it does not require conversion to Christianity but instead posits that God has in mind a special, separate means of Jewish salvation. This theory is based on the 'mystery' clause in Romans 11:25-32. While it is not strongly supported by many of Paul's arguments, it does find its strongest support in Paul's argument shift from Romans 1-10 to Romans 11. From chapters 1 to 10, it seems to be the logical conclusion that the Jews, if they cling to their unbelief, would be rejected. However, in chapter 11, Paul changes his line of argument. Without mention of Jesus or faith in Jesus as Messiah, he emphatically affirms that all Israel will be saved. I intend to argue that this supports the '*Sonderweg*' theory of Jewish salvation.

4.1: The Conversion Theory

This theory attempts to reconcile the faithfulness of

God to the Jews with the appearance of Jesus as Messiah. The way in which this is done is to require Jewish conversion to Christianity. But this denies the validity of the Jewish covenant with Yahweh. Conversion theorists, those who think Paul requires the Jews to convert to Christianity, argue that this is not a difficulty because God's faithfulness to the Jews is fulfilled in Christ. By redefining the term 'Israel' conversion proponents are able to apply it to those with faith in Jesus rather than as an ethnocentric term applied only to ethnic Israel.

In this theory, Paul makes much use of Hebrew scriptural passages to argue that Jesus is the long-awaited Jewish Messiah. The references, however, are removed from their original context and Paul creatively adjusts them in order to make his points. For this theory, however, that is irrelevant because what is important is what Paul ultimately ends up with: in this case, support for the belief that the Jews must convert to Christianity in order to be saved.

4.1.1 The Faithfulness of God

The faithfulness of God, especially in relation to His promises to Israel, is a predominant theme in Romans 9-11. God's faithfulness to the Jews is also a necessary premise for the conversion theory of Israel's salvation. At three points in Paul's letter to the Romans, he refers to the

faithfulness of God. In 9:6 he asserts that "it is not as though the word of God had failed"; in 9:14 he responds emphatically to his own query: "Is there injustice on God's part? By no means"; and finally in 11:1 he repudiates the suggestion that God has rejected His people. The reason that Paul continually returns to this theme is because he knows that the salvation of the Gentiles relies on the faithfulness of God to the Jews.

J. C. Beker defines "δικαιοσύνη Θεου" as both the faithfulness of God to Himself and as God's "redemptive activity in accordance with his faithfulness"[459]. Even with regard to the conversion theory it is necessary to maintain God's faithfulness. If God is not faithful to His promises to Israel, then he is not required to be faithful to His promises to the Gentiles either. As well, by stressing this faithfulness, proponents of the conversion theory are able to maintain the continuity between the gospel and Israel. The gospel relies on Judaism for its historical record and even its Messiah. If one argues that God is indeed faithful to Israel, then the continuity and the connection stands[460].

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[459] J.C. Beker, "The Faithfulness of God and the Priority of Israel in Paul's Letter to the Romans", HTR 79:1-3 (1986), 15.

[460] James D. G. Dunn, The Theology of Paul the Apostle, (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1988), 520.

For conversion proponents, the faithfulness of God is comprised of four components which have been examined extensively in this work: the election, priority, rejection and remnant of the Jews. In classical exegesis, which most supports the conversion position, each component was considered in a context of conversion. With regard to election there has always been two different stances: either they have been elected as a nation or they have not. The conversion theory does not deny their election as a "chosen" people but does deny that this election automatically leads to salvation. For, it is argued, there have always been divisions in the Jewish election. This argument is based on Paul's use of the Jacob and Isaac passages in Romans 9:6b-13. Proponents argue that this passage represents God's unconditional election, His free choice without any basis[461]. This stipulates that God chooses whomever He pleases without regard to deed or nationality; indeed, it is an act of grace. This has implications for the conversion theory as it means that Gentiles are now included in the people of God since election is separate from works or race. It also explains how God's word can still stand and yet so many Jews

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[461] For instance see: John Piper, "Universalism in Romans 9-11? Testing the Exegesis of Thomas Halbot", Reformed Journal 33 (1983),11; John Piper, Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 1983), 136; and James Dunn, Theology, 510-11.

are accursed[462]. Despite the fact that God grants mercy without any basis in act or deed, there is a condition, and it is here that the presence of the classical exegetes is felt. God elects those in ethnic Israel and among Gentiles too, who will "respond to his call in Christ"[463].

The priority of the Jews and the rejection of the Jews are connected in the conversion theory. But there exists a contradiction. Proponents assert that in order for God to remain faithful to His promises, the Jews must maintain a priority of election[464]. However, if the Jews are given a priority of election by virtue of their nationality, then the unconditional election of God is challenged. If the Jews maintain a priority because they are Jewish, then the salvation of the Gentiles on the same basis is prevented. The conversion theory deals with this difficulty in the same manner as it did with the election of the Jews: not all the Jews were elected to salvation.

The rejection of the Jews is an important aspect of the conversion stance, primarily because it challenges God's faithfulness and this must be explained. If the Jews were

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[462] Ibid., 11 and Justification, p. 136.

[463] Scott Hafemann, "The Salvation of Israel in Romans 11:25-32: A Response to Krister Stendahl", Ex Auditu: An Annual of the Frederick Neumann Symposium on Theological Interpretation of Scripture, (Volume 4, 1988), 45.

[464] Beker, 14 and 15.

elected and are now rejected, it would stand to reason that the Gentiles as well could be as summarily rejected. Many reasons are given for the rejection of Israel but each is attributed to Israel itself and not to any faithlessness on the part of God. One reason is that they, Israel, are faithless, both to God and the Law: "Ethnic Israel has proven to be faithless and has demonstrated this fact through disobedience to their very law"[465]. Another reason is that they possessed an advantage in their early election[466] but they did not submit to God's righteousness, an echo of Romans 10:3[467]. They are also guilty, some argue, of an exclusivism which excludes Gentiles because they do not possess the covenant[468], a sense of pride which Paul tried to halt (Romans 11:17-24). Finally, proponents argue, the Jews are guilty of not accepting Jesus as the Messiah[469].

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[465] Michael Cranford, "Election and Ethnicity: Paul's View of Israel in Romans 9:1-13", JSNT 50 (1993), 31.

[466] Dunn, Theology, p. 523.

[467] Mary Ann Getty, "Paul and the Salvation of Israel: A Perspective on Romans 9-11", CBQ 50 (1988), 463; Steven Richard Bechtler. "Christ, the telos of the Law: The Goal of Romans 10:4", CBQ 56(2) (1994), 296.

[468] Bechtler, 296-8.

[469] See for instance: Eldon Jay Epp, "Jewish-Gentile Continuity in Paul: Torah and/or Faith (Romans 9:1-5)", HTR 79(1-3) (1986), 88; James Dunn, Theology, 523; Bruce W. Longenecker, "Different Answers to Different Issues: Israel, the Gentiles and Salvation History in Romans 9-11", JSNT 36 (1989), 102; James D. Strauss. "God's Promise and Universal

Because the Gentiles believed and the Jews did not, the Jews were rejected. But this does not preclude the establishment of a remnant, which, argue conversion theorists, only strengthens the faithfulness of God to His promises to Israel.

The idea of remnant is itself presented in Romans 9-11 as both a judgement and a hope. In 9:27-8 Paul cites Isaiah's judgement on Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, for the Lord will execute his sentence on the earth with rigor and dispatch" (Isa 10:22-23). According to Scott Hafemann, Paul is using the "remnant within the context of the judgement of God to stress Israel's current rejection and hardening"[470]. But in Chapter 11, reflecting a shift in Paul's argument, the remnant becomes a symbol of

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History: The Theology of Romans 9", Grace Unlimited Pinnock (ed.), (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), 204; and Terence Donaldson. "Riches for the Gentiles (Rom 11:12): Israel's Rejection and Paul's Gentile Mission", JBL 112(1) (1993), 86.

[470] Hafemann, 49.

hope[471]. The remnant imagery of Rom 11:5[472] represents the positive function of remnant[473]. The purpose of linking the judgement aspect of remnant from the Hebrew Bible with the hope of Romans 11:5 is to establish a continuity[474]. Paul appropriates the idea of reduction of Israel and presents it as the "light", a hope for the future. Proponents of the conversion theory argue that this hope, then, leads to Christ. But what of the Chosen people of God, "Israel"?

4.1.2 The Redefinition of "Israel"

It is difficult to reconcile the idea of conversion with the notion that Paul tried to uphold the priority and distinctiveness of Israel. Conversion theorists argue that Paul redefines the term 'Israel' in order to apply it to those with faith in Christ as opposed to the ethnic nation

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[471] See for instance: Getty, "Paul and the Salvation", 466; Strauss, 203; Hafemann, 165; Strauss agrees with Getty that the remnant is a symbol of hope here, but his addition is what makes it agreeable to conversion proponents: this idea of the remnant summons unbelieving Jews to repent of their unbelief.

[472] "So too at the present time there is a remnant chosen by God".

[473] Markus Barth, "The Testimony of Romans 9-11 and other Pauline Texts", The People of God, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 5, (JSOT Press, 1983), 38.

[474] Dunn, Theology, 519.

of Jews. James Dunn[475] asserts that the function of Israel "as a name is to identify primarily by relation to God and to God's choice" and this notion of choice and election, discussed earlier, is important to Romans 9-11.

The passage concerning Jacob and Isaac (9:6b-13) is about the free and unconditional election of God. It is on the basis of this passage that the redefinition of Israel occurs. The primary argument, one which challenges the priority of Israel, is that in Israel's prior election, God never intended to elect every single individual Israelite[476]. As Frank Thielman argues, Paul is now "defining Israel on the basis of God's choice rather than on the basis of national affiliation"[477]. This redefinition challenges even the covenantal membership of the Jews. Paul rejects, according to Michael Cranford, "Torah as identifier of covenant membership"[478]. In Romans 9-11, Israel has ceased to be solely the

> self-understanding of a people who identify themselves as chosen by God, the children of

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[475] Ibid., 506.

[476] Piper, "Universalism", 11, 12, 13; Justification, 136. Piper argues that this applies even to the Gentiles: not every Gentile is to be included in the salvation of God.

[477] Frank Thielman, "Unexpected Mercy: Echoes of a Biblical Motif in Romans 9-11", Scottish Journal of Theology 47, 169.

[478] Cranford, 28.

> Israel, descendants of the patriarch (Jacob/ Israel) through whom the choice and election came[479].

As a result, covenant membership, membership in the people of God, is separated from ethnic lineage or distinction. Those who are the people of God, the true Israel, are "only those who obey the covenant"[480]. It is necessary to determine who exactly defines this group.

One point on which the proponents agree is that this group contains Gentiles. James Dunn says that "when Israel is defined by God's call then it should occasion no surprise when the other nations, the non-Jews are included within Israel"[481]. Israel, as a result, contains those called by God. Dunn bases his argument on Paul's olive tree analogy of Rom 11:17. He says "there is only one tree, thus one Israel"[482]. The result of this redefinition of Israel is that the promises of God to Israel are being fulfilled in His offer to the Gentiles[483]. However, it also results in the exclusion of Torah as anything more than an ethnic boundary marker.

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[479] Dunn, Theology, 506.

[480] Strauss, 196.

[481] Dunn, Theology, 514.

[482] Ibid., 525.

[483] Getty, "Paul and the Salvation", 461.

4.1.3 Scriptural Support

Paul often refers to Jewish scripture in order to defend his arguments, a Rabbinic style typical of the time. Sometimes he misquotes or combines quotes, but most of the time he takes references from their context and uses them to apply to whatever argument he is using at the time. He quotes from the Pentateuch, the prophets and the Psalms[484]. By doing so, Paul is trying to show that "God's choice to include the Gentiles within Israel is not as inconsistent with Scripture as it first seems"[485]. In this section I will examine scriptural passages used in Romans, especially chapters 9 to 11, and the way in which conversion theorists use them to make their argument. Some passages in particular which I will examine are: Abraham's faith (Genesis 15:6); the affirmations of Yahweh (Exodus 33:19); key Isaiah passages which Paul uses to defend the Gentile mission and predict Israel's stumble, and finally Leviticus 18:5, which Paul uses to demonstrate that faith in Christ is the way to salvation.

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[484] Barth, 31.

[485] Thielman, 178.

4.1.3.1 The Faith of Abraham: Romans 4/ Genesis 15:6

Within the classical interpretation of Paul, especially that of Augustine, Luther and Calvin, Paul's use of Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4 is regarded as the belief that the Gentiles are counted among the elect of God because of faith. Luther in particular asserted that justification by faith was at the heart of both Romans and Christianity itself. Were this applied solely to Gentile conversion or belief it would not necessarily contradict the Jewish path to God. But within the context of required conversion Paul's understanding of faith, as based on Abraham's, is considered to apply to the Jews as well as challenging Torah-righteousness.

In Genesis 15:6 Abraham is said to have believed the Lord and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. The NIB commentary elaborates:

> the verb for 'reckon' likely has a cultic background wherein the priest formally declares that a gift has been properly offered (Lev 7:8, 17:1). In response to Abraham's faith, God in effect, functions as a priest... and formally declares that Abrahm is righteous[486].

Abraham was justified by God without basis in act or deed. In fact, Abraham "has nothing of which to boast of before God"[487]. Thus the question is why was he "righteoused"?

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[486] New Interpreter's Bible (NIB), Vol. 1, "Genesis: 15:1-21 Commentary", p. 445.

[487] Thomas H. Tobin, "What shall we say that Abraham Found? The Controversy Behind Romans 4", HTR 88:4 (1995),

Paul himself provides an answer: "λογιζεται η πιστις αυτου εις δικαιοσυνην·" (Romans 4:5b). The fact that God's reckoning occurred before the bestowal of the Law is also important to the conversion position; it means that Abraham was reckoned righteous by faith *apart* from the Law. Not only does it challenge the validity of the Torah but it assigns to Abraham the position of Father to both Jews and Gentiles on the basis of faith[488], thus establishing a continuity between Christianity and Judaism.

As a result, this covenant with Abraham "furnishes Paul a scriptural way to argue that justification by faith has been God's plan all along for Jew and Gentile alike"[489]. It is this argument which supports the conversion interpretation of Romans 9. God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15 is to be passed down through Isaac and not Ishmael, the first demonstration of divine election and reprobation. Paul associates Isaac with the children of the promise (Rom 9:8) and places the passage in the context of Abraham's faith. Thus, says Robert Gundry, the promise to Abraham "was not through the law, but through the

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[488] Ibid.

[489] Charles H. Talbert, "Paul in the Covenant", Review and Expositor 84(2) (1987), 300.

righteousness of faith... Faith is the instrument through which righteousness is received, and that righteousness is the circumstance in which the promise is received"[490]. This is an important point for the conversion position which argues that faith, in Christ particularly, is the only guarantor of salvation, both negating Torah and Judaism in the process.

4.1.3.2 Romans 9:14-18/ Exodus 33:19

Exodus 33:19 contains four powerful affirmations made by Yahweh to Moses. The last two concern us here: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy". The first "concerns the completely unfettered capacity of Yahweh to be generous" and the second "again asserts Yahweh's capacity to act positively as Yahweh chooses"[491]. While these affirmations are primarily directed at Moses, "they do seem to reassure Moses on the future attentiveness of Yahweh toward Israel in its hazardous journey. Life goes on for Israel only because

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[490] Robert H. Gundry, "A Breaking of Expectations: The Rhetoric of Suspense in Paul's Letter to the Romans", Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honour of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday, Soderland and Wright (ed.), (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1999), 256-7.

[491] NIB Vol. 1, "Exodus 33:17-23 Commentary", 940.

Yahweh is free, gracious and merciful"[492]. This passage in particular provides "the basis for his understanding of the freedom and the faithfulness of God to Israel in Romans 9"[493].

As discussed earlier, it is important for proponents of the conversion position to maintain God's faithfulness to Israel since Gentile inclusion is so inextricably linked to it. If God is not faithful to His promises to the Jews, then He may not be faithful to His new promises to the Gentiles. The appearance of Christ challenges God's covenantal promises since conversion to Christ requires an abrogation of Torah-righteousness and Jewish faith. To solve this dilemma, conversion proponents use Paul's interpretation of Yahweh's words to Moses in Romans 9:15, in which Paul presents the absolute and free will of God.

Paul places the citation from Exodus (33:19) in a context of potential injustice on the part of God[494]. Paul changes the underlying meaning of the passage from the promise of Yahweh's presence in the life of the Jews to a judgement. First, Paul removes any notion that one might garner God's mercy by will or exertion (9:16), and then he

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[492] Ibid.

[493] W. S. Campbell, "The Freedom and Faithfulness of God in Relation to Israel", JSNT 13 (1981), 30.

[494] For instance, see Strauss, 78.

demonstrates God's gracious judgement in action against Pharaoh, a prime example of one who did not receive God's grace (9:17). The judgement aspect seems to contradict any notion of receiving God's grace via the Torah. Grace is bestowed by God and no human endeavouring is effective[495], yet God and His election is not arbitrary[496]. Both aspects of mercy and judgement are found in Paul's interpretation of Exodus 33:19. On the one hand, there is a reflection of the original context of the passage, "God's glory consists in his ability to bestow freely as an act of unconstrained mercy"[497]. This mercy is evident when God elected Jacob before he was born. The judgement aspect is apparent when God hardens Pharaoh for His own purpose. Proponents of the conversion theory argues that Israel is hardened in this way so as to bring salvation to the Gentiles. In other words, God's grace "has been denied to rebellious Israel... (and) as always, only a remnant of the believers have access to the presence of God"[498].

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[495] See John Piper, Justification, 70.

[496] Campbell, 30; and Strauss, 197.

[497] Hafemann, 46.

[498] Strauss, 197.

4.1.3.3 Romans 9:20-9:33, 10:20/ Isaiah 8:14-65:2

These particular passages demonstrate the absolute power of God, Israel's stumble and defend the mission to the Gentiles. It can be broken into several sections: the potter and clay imagery, Gentile mission, the "rock" of Christ passage, and Christ as the *telos* of the Law.

4.1.4 Potter and Clay Imagery (Romans 9:20-24/ Isa 29:16 and 45:9)

Paul introduces imagery of the potter and clay in order to demonstrate the absolute power and authority of God. He says:

> But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, `Why have you made me thus?' Has the potter no right over the clay... (Romans 9:21).

In this verse, Paul is responding to a claim that God is unjust because He still finds fault with humanity. The context of this passage is a discussion of God's mercy and grace and the exclusion of human endeavoring in earning this grace. Paul argues that God alone determines upon whom to be merciful and from whom to withhold His grace and compassion. Before his use of the potter/clay imagery, Paul illustrates his point with the example of Pharoah, whom God hardened to serve His own purpose (9:17). Paul ends this passage with the words "and he hardens the heart of whomever

he wills" (9:18b). The difficulty which the objector in Paul's passage points out is that if God alone is responsible for all actions based on the bestowing or withholding of His grace, then how can a mere human be blamed? Paul's response in 9:20 is an emphatic admonition not to question the actions of God, a response which does not resolve the dilemma.

Romans 9:21 alludes to Isaiah 29:16:

> You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay; that the thing made should say of its maker 'He did not make me' or the thing formed say of him who formed it 'He has no understanding'.

The context of the Isaiah passage is a response to a plot by the Judean leaders to ally with Egypt against Assyria[499]. They hide their schemes from both Isaiah and the Lord and "try to manipulate the course of events and thus preempt the authority of God"[500]. Those who challenge God's plan fail to realize that "thou art our Father, we are the clay, and thou art our potter; we are all the work of thy hand" (Isa 64:8). Paul is attempting to illustrate that it is the prerogative of the creator to determine which vessels He will elect for mercy.

This notion is also present in Isaiah 45:9: "Woe to him

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[499] The Interpreter's Bible (IB), Vol. 5, "Isaiah", 326.

[500] Ibid.

who strives with his Maker, an earthen vessel with the potter! Does the clay say to him who fashions it 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles?'". The context of this passage is Israel's distaste toward Cyrus' part in their deliverance. The prophet criticizes their complaints: "The prophet's sarcasm in these lines is a wholesome reminder of who men are before the Maker of all"[501]. Paul uses these passages to demonstrate that God acts freely and humanity has no right to challenge divine authority.

Despite Paul's intense criticism of the objector, however, he is unable to overcome the criticism. His response that God is solely responsible, is irreconcilable with the idea that humanity is also responsible for their actions. Paul decides not to attempt to solve this problem but rather is determined to uphold the absolute authority of God.

4.1.5 Gentile Mission (Romans 9:20-24/ Isaiah 65:1)

Because the Gentiles are not expected to convert to Judaism and because so many Jews failed to accept Jesus as Messiah, Paul feels the need to defend his Gentile mission. In Romans 10:20-21 he reflects on Isaiah's words:

> I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did

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[501] Ibid., 526.

> not seek me. I said 'Here I am, here I am' to a nation that did not call on my name. I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices (Isa 65:1-3).

In this passage Isaiah is addressing two groups in the Israelite nation which are now separated: "One is composed of those who combine pagan practices with their worship of the God of Israel; the other, of the faithful remnant of the people"[502]. In Isaiah's version as opposed to Paul's in Romans 9:20-24, Yahweh is telling his people Israel that he "was always available and accessible. To their cry 'where is he?'... he answers 'Here I am'. It was in reality the people who were silent; they did not seek Yahweh or call on his name"[503].

This differs from Paul's version of Isa 65:1-3:

> Ησαιας δε αποτολμα και λεγει, Ευρεθην τοις εμε μη ζητουσιν, εμφανης εγενομην τοις εμε μη επερωτωσιν· προς δε τον Ισραηλ λεγει, Ολην την ημεραν εξεπετασα τας χειρας μου προς λαον απειθουντα και αντιλεγοντα· (Romans 10:20-21).

Paul's version is placed in a different context. He uses it as an example of God's plan to offer salvation to the Gentiles from the first, despite the fact that the original passage was directed at Israel and not a prophecy about the Gentiles. As Steven Bechtler asserts, Isaiah is

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[502] IB, Vol. 5, "Isaiah", 745.

[503] Ibid.

prophesizing that "God will be found by exiled Israel, even though the nation has not sought God and announces God's willingness to embrace again this disobedient people"[504].

Paul has attempted to defend his mission to the Gentiles throughout the course of his letter to the Romans. It seems evident that Paul is here appealing to the Jews. His reference to Isaiah, a Jewish prophet, and his reference to Isaiah's prophecy, creates a bridge between Judaism and Pauline Christianity. Whereas Isaiah was referring to the Jewish disobedience toward Yahweh, Paul directs the prophecy toward the Gentiles. By doing so he has established the Gentile mission within Jewish history. When Paul cites Isaiah's words about a disobedient and contrary people, he is able to argue that the Jews are disobedient because they do not accept the mission to the Gentiles.

4.1.6 The "Rock" of Christ (Rom 9:31-33/ Isaiah 51:1 and 28:16)

This passage attributes two faults to the Jews which results in their rejection. First was their failure to attain righteousness by the Law and second, their stumble over Jesus as Messiah. In Romans 9:31-32 Paul asserts that Israel failed to attain Torah-righteousness because they did

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[504] Bechtler, 307.

not pursue it by faith. Thus "they have stumbled over the stumbling stone". Conversion proponents argue that this 'stone' refers to Christ[505]. When Paul speaks of stumbling over the stumbling stone, it is in a context of righteousness. He is contrasting the righteousness which comes through faith with the righteousness which is based on the Law. Despite the position of conversion theorists who argue that the "stone" refers to Christ, it is evident that the stone in Romans 9:32 refers to the Jewish pursuit of righteousness as if it were based on works instead of faith.

Paul's reference in Romans 9:31-2 is based on Isaiah 51:1[506]. It is part of a poem and this first section is an "eschatological oracle of comfort developed by an appeal to past historical revelation by a promise of future salvation (and)... an urgent imperative to listen"[507]. This refers to the "repeated blows from foreign conquerors, the decimation of the population... the condition of the exiles"[508]. But

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[505] For example Tom Schreiner, "Israel's Failure to Attain Righteousness in Romans 9:30-10:3", Trinity Journal 12(2) (1991), 214, who also argues that this passage proves that the Israel's stumbling had been predicted from the start.

[506] "Hearken to me, you who pursue deliverance, you who seek the Lord; look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were digged".

[507] IB, Vol. 5, "Isaiah", 589.

[508] Ibid., 590.

the passage also appeals to Abraham and his promise from Yahweh, "a hint of hope that Israel might be saved from her present plight"[509]. It also speaks of a time when Israel will be restored at the end of human history. It is remotely possible to argue that this hope refers to Christ and that Israel, by her unbelief 'stumbled' over him, but this does require a rather creative reading of the original text. In fact, it may require reading more into Paul's words then he originally intended to say.

This idea is also presented in Paul's altered version of Isaiah 28:16 in Romans 9:33[510]. Isaiah says in the original passage:

> therefore thus says the Lord God, 'Behold I am laying in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation; He who believes in it will not be in haste (28:16).

This passage originally referred to "the one sure foundation of salvation in the day of trouble... Israel's covenant with God"[511]. The cornerstone is faith, to Paul, an allusion to Abraham, and those "who trust in God are not flustered;

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[509] Ibid.

[510] Paul's version of Isaiah's passage is: "as it is written, 'Behold I am laying in Zion a stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall, and he who believes in him shall not be put out to shame" (Rom 9:33).

[511] IB, Vol. 5, "Isaiah", 318.

their's is the composure of faith"[512]. But when Paul's version alone is applied to the conversion theory of salvation it is readily apparent how some can argue that it refers to Christ as the 'stone', especially in the context of the faith statements in Romans[513]. This passage (9:33), more so than the first, can be applied to Paul's belief in Jesus as Messiah. Paul often made reference in Romans to the importance of faith in Jesus as Messiah so it would not be surprising if he were to perceive the disbelief of the Jews as the result of stumbling over Jesus.

4.1.7 Christ the *telos* of the Law (10:4)

Imminently necessary to the conversion position is the premise that Christ is the end or fulfilment of the Law. While this premise created a connection between Judaism and Christianity, it creates a discontinuity by abrogating Judaism. It requires conversion of the Jews and the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah for salvation. There are four aspects in particular which are related to this argument: Christ and the faithfulness of God; Christ and the Law; Christ and salvation, and Christ and Israel. Each

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[512] Ibid.

[513] A brief compilation of these statements include: Romans 2:16, 3:24, 4:23-24, 5:1b, 6:3, 7:4, 8:1, 8:29, 9:1, 10:4, 10:9, 15:8-9.

aspect is an integral part of the conversion position.

In Romans 5 and 6 Paul speaks at great length about the human condition and the fact that he believes all humans exist under the domain of sin[514]. Humanity is unable, by their own efforts to remove themselves from this state. As James Strauss states "(I)n man's *de facto* condition, he cannot become righteous, only God's righteousness graciously extended through Christ can reconcile man to God"[515]. The problem is the human condition and its enslavement to sin; the solution for conversion theorists is a universal salvation through Jesus as Messiah.

Proponents of the conversion theory are obligated to explain how the appearance of Jesus as Messiah is reconcilable with the faithfulness of God to His promises to the Jews. First of all, they must connect the faithfulness of God to faith in Christ, and they do so by referring to the faith of Abraham. Faith in Christ is now the only means to salvation[516], whereas with the Jews and Abraham it was

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[514] For example in Romans 5:12 Paul says: "Therefore sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned"; and in Romans 6:14 Paul describes the human condition as it stands after the appearance of Christ: "For sin will have no dominion over you".

[515] Strauss, 195.

[516] For instance see Longenecker, 99; Thielman, 173; Getty, "Paul on the Covenants and the Future of Israel", BTB

faith in the purpose of God. By arguing in this way, conversion theorists are able to say that Christ ended and fulfilled the Law, indeed abrogated any Jewish means to salvation. The Christ-event, and the implications of it:

> makes(s) clear the true nature of Israel's priority. It does not lie in Israel's boasting, that is, in the empirical achievement of 'covenant keeping' or in Israel's elitist awareness of its exclusive status before God, but solely in God's faithfulness to his promises, that is, in God's grace[517].

This means the complete abrogation of Judaism, the Torah and its inherent believers. Romans 10:4 one of Paul's most debated passages, lends credence to conversion theory.

It is important to note that not only did Christ end the Law, for the conversion position, but he was its intended goal. The fault of Israel, then, is that they cling to the Law instead of turning to faith in Christ. They are the old 'Israel', which

> continues to define itself in the traditional terms of the law, that which separates them from other nations, is thereby failing to appreciate the role of the law... They fail to understand that the law is to be understood in terms of faith and in relation to Christ[518].

Steven Bechtler, for example, goes one step further, and argues that the Jewish rejection of Christ is the result of

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17(3) (1987), 95; and Dunn, Theology, 517.

[517] Beker, 16.

[518] Dunn, Theology, 514.

their "exclusivistic understanding of its privilege as the people of God's covenant"[519]. Conversion theorists argue that Christ is the goal toward which the Law aimed[520]. Israel misunderstood and they stumbled over "Christ the stumbling stone"[521]. Had they approached it by faith in Jesus as the Messiah, as is suggested in Romans 9:32-33, they "would inevitably believe in Christ, for the law pursued in faith would naturally point to Christ"[522].

Now that the conversion theorists have concluded that the only approach to God is through faith, the third and fourth of our aspects are in view, Christ and salvation and Christ and Israel. Paul has indelibly linked the salvation of the Jews to the salvation of the Gentiles. Israel is temporarily hardened (Rom 11:7) in order to bring salvation to the Gentiles (11:11b). As a result, Paul hopes this will make the Jews jealous and they will return. The hardening is a part of God's plan for the salvation of all Israel[523]. Even Paul's olive tree analogy (11:17-24) is evidence of

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[519] Bechtler, 296-298, 305.

[520] For instance see Bechtler, 289, 299; Schreiner, 214; and Robert B. Sloan, "Paul and the Law: Why the Law Cannot Save", Novum Testamentum 33(1) (1991), 47.

[521] Sloan, 56.

[522] Schreiner, 214.

[523] Getty, "Paul and the Salvation", 459.

this salvific connection: "Both the future salvation of Israel and the present salvation of Gentiles grow out of the same root and lead to being grafted into the same tree"[524].

In order for the Jews to be saved, according to the conversion position, they must come to Christ in faith[525]. Conversion theorists argue that this is apparent in Paul's own words. In Romans 9:32 Paul says that the Jews did not attain righteousness because they did not pursue it by faith. Romans 10:4b says that "τελος γαρ νομου Χριστος εις δικαιοσυνην παντι τῷ πιστευοντι·". Finally, in 11:23, Paul refers directly to Israel's salvation: "κακεινοι δε, εαν μη επιμενῶσιν τη απιστια, εγκεντρισθησονται· δυνατος γαρ εστιν ο θεος παλιν εγκεντρισαι αυτους·". Paul himself even connects Israel with Christ when he says "ῶν οι πατερες, και εξ ῶν ο Χριστος το κατα σαρκα·" (9:5b).

Conversion theorists perceive Christ as the fulfilment of Judaism, as they did when they argued that Christ was the

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[524] Hafemann, 54.

[525] Anthony J. Guerra, "Romans: Paul's Purpose and Audience with Special Attention to Romans 9-11", RB 1990-T, 97-2 and Bruce Longenecker find support for this position in Paul. Guerra in particular defines the mystery passage (11:25) in this manner: "Paul expects the majority of Jews who presently reject the gospel to come to believe in Christ" (236). Longenecker (100, 103), holds a similar position: "Israel will be saved not first, but as a result of the Gentile mission through faith in Christ".

end of the Law. Judaism and all its inherent beliefs led to Christ as the Messiah. Not only is Jesus the Messiah, argue conversion theorists, but he is the apex of Jewish teaching: "Jesus can be understood properly only in continuity with the faith of Israel and in the light of the Hebrew Scriptures"[526]. It is possible to go one step further: "Paul's thesis then, is that the promises of the covenant with Israel are being fulfilled (in Christ)"[527]. Conversion proponents argue that Christ is Israel's long-awaited Messiah and that through Christ, God is keeping his promise to Abraham[528].

The difficulty, however, is in determining whether God is still faithful to His promises when faced with the rejection of so many Jews. The solution is that God's election was never based on human endeavouring, Torah-works or character. Salvation is only the result of election combined with faith. Before one argues that the Jews do possess faith, from Abraham forward, conversion theorists claim that faith in Jesus as the Messiah as the only requirement for salvation. Longenecker, for example,

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[526] Harvey Cox, The Silencing of Leonardo Boff: The Vatican and the Future of World Christianity, (Illinois: Meyer-Stone Books, 1988), 154.

[527] Getty, "Paul and the Salvation", 46.

[528] For instance see Talbert, 303.

asserts:

> Paul's point... is that the one who is born a Jew keeps in step when he becomes a believer in the Jewish Messiah, so that Jewish birthright is complete only in Christian faith[529].

Not only does the conversion theory challenge the priority of Judaism as the chosen people of God but it claims that Judaism is fulfilled only in Christ.

4.1.8 Jewish Rejection: Romans 10:5-19/ Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30:11-32:21

This passage, Deut 30-32, is concerned with the reasons the Jews did not accept Jesus. Paul argues that the Gentiles had always been the aim of God's plan, that a universal salvation is offered, that Israel often stumbles and that Israel's jealousy was predicted by Moses.

Paul begins this section with a reference to the words of Moses: "Μῶυσης γαρ γραφει την δικαιοσυνην την εκ του νομου, οτι ο ποιησας αυτα ανθρῶπος ζησεται εν αυτοις·" (Rom 10:5). This verse is an echo of Leviticus 18:5: "You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by doing so one shall live: I am the Lord" (Lev 18:5). This entire chapter of Leviticus is devoted to warnings and rules. Leviticus 18:1-5, in particular, is a warning against the customs of pagan

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[529] Longenecker, 105.

nations[530]. It is a command to "do God's decrees and statutes and to keep them in mind while going about the business of living"[531], particularly when faced with the pagan customs of others. Since Israel "had been called to be a holy nation... any participation in pagan practices would mock the call to holiness that had been issued to the nation"[532]. But this passage is directed at those who claim the Lord (Yahweh) as their God[533]. It is an commandment to follow the Law, although "keeping the law will not lead to eternal life... it will lead to an abundant life"[534]. Despite the efforts of some, this passage cannot be interpreted to mean that one will gain life by following God's Law and this is Paul's point in Romans 10:5. The only way to live, freed from the reign of death, is to "οτι εαν ομολογησης εν τῶ στοματι σου κυριον Ιησουν και πιστευσης εν τη καρδια σου οτι ο θεος αυτον ηγειρεν εκ νεκρῶν, σῶθηση·" (10:9).

Romans 10:6-8 is probably the most difficult passage in Romans 9 to 11. It is based on Deuteronomy 30:12-14. Paul has rearranged the quotation to support his argument but in

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[530] NIB, Vol. 1, "Leviticus 18:1-30 Commentary", 1124.

[531] Ibid.

[532] Ibid.

[533] Ibid., 1125.

[534] Ibid., 1128.

Deuteronomy it reads:

> It is not in heaven, that you should say 'Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it'. Neither is it beyond the sea that you should say 'Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear and do it?' But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it (Deut 30:12-14).

This passage is part of a speech made by Yahweh to Israel (Deut 29:1-30:20) about the Law and why Israel should keep it. It is about repentance and forgiveness for Israel's disobedience[535] and a new choice for Israel: "they could either abandon God and the covenant altogether... or they could return in sincerity and truth to keep God's covenant and to remain unwaveringly loyal to the Lord as God"[536]. This passage makes three points clear: "by the grace of the Lord God, Israel's renewal is a genuine responsibility; it thrusts aside the objections that could be raised against trusting in this possibility; and it uncovers and refutes the unspoken thoughts of despair and disillusionment the people secretly nursed"[537]. God's Law is not hidden in the heavens or below the sea and they do not need someone to bring it to them. It is close to their heart: all they have

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[535] NIB, Vol. 2, "Deuteronomy 29:1-30:20 Commentary", 511.

[536] Ibid.

[537] Ibid.

to do is hear and confess it.

Paul applies this passage to Christ. Christ is the one who ascends into heaven, descends into the sea and rises again, a reference to the resurrection. Paul says that the people must confess that Jesus is Messiah and then they will be saved. The original text was about forgiveness and renewal of Israel as a nation of God but Paul uses it to argue that Jesus is Lord of both Jews and Gentiles.

The last part of the Deuteronomic section in Romans 9 to 11 is Romans 10:19 in which Paul again refers to the words of Moses:

> αλλα λεγω, μη Ισραηλ ουκ εγνω; πρωτος Μωυσης λεγει, εγω παραζηλωσω υμας επ ουκ εθνει, επι εθνει ασυνετω παροργιω υμας· (Romans 10:19).

In its original context, the passage different:

> They have stirred me to jealousy with what is no God; they have provoked me with their idols. So I will stir them to jealousy with those who are no people; I will provoke them with a foolish nation (Deut 32:21).

It is evident that in Romans 10:19 Paul excludes God's reason for provoking Israel, which in Deuteronomy is His jealousy and anger at the apostasy and idolatry of Israel.

The context of this passage is the "Song of Moses". It is a "warning to Israel against continued disobedience and apostasy. Its concluding message of hope that Israel, in spite of its unfaithfulness, will ultimately be

vindicated"[538]. The Song is comprised of warnings and curses which, a suggestion of a negative and threatening future. However, the "song brings an assurance of Israel's ultimate triumph among the nations"[539]. The particular passage which Paul stresses (Romans 10:19) is concerned about punishment:

> Having seen how the people have responded to the care lavished upon them, God determines that they must be punished in order to bring them to their senses. The form this punishment will take is then determined as attacks by unnamed enemies, who are described as 'no people' and 'a foolish nation'... (one) can only assume that a succession of foreign invaders is intended ... and that the titles are deliberately derogatory[540].

Paul's interpretation of this passage in the light of its original context is definitely a creative one. Paul takes the references of 'foolish nation' to refer to the calling of the Gentiles to be a people of God. He agrees with the idea that the Jews have disobeyed, although in Deuteronomy Yahweh is angry because of Israel's ungratefulness; in Romans God is angry because of their disbelief. But Paul changes the entire meaning of 'no people' and 'foolish nation' in order to defend his mission to the Gentiles. In Deuteronomy Yahweh is calling His nation Israel to return and promising punishment if they do

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[538] NIB, Vol. 2, "Deuteronomy 31:30-32:52 Commentary", 526.

[539] Ibid.

[540] Ibid., 528.

not; in Romans, however, it becomes a calling to grace for the Gentile people.

4.1.9 Implications of the Conversion Theory: Supersessionism

The conversion theory of Israel's salvation has some positive attributes including the establishment of a continuity between the Hebrew scriptures and the gospel, and the ability to present a defensible interpretation of Paul. However, the extremity of this view is such that it denies the validity of Judaism as a path to God, promotes a Christ-based prejudice against any non-Christians, especially Jews, and prevents an open dialogue between Christians and Jews in our own time.

Harvey Cox, in his 1988 book, *The Silencing of Leonardo Boff*, describes the supersessionist position:

> Jesus Christ puts an absolute end to the 'old covenant'. Israel is replaced by the Church. The Jewish way of approaching God is totally superseded by the Christian way. The chosen people are supplanted... the break is absolute[541].

This definition includes two elements which negatively impact the Jewish faith. First of all, Christianity and Christians have replaced the Jews as the 'true Israel' and second, Judaism is displaced as a means to salvation. The

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[541] Cox, 153.

notion of replacement theology puts an end to any exclusivistic claims of Judaism as the covenant people of Yahweh[542]. Now that salvation, through Christ, is offered to Gentiles as well as Jews, the Jews can no longer claim an advantage.

Another element of the replacement or displacement theology is its relegation of the Law to the past as an ineffective means of salvation. Talbert, for instance, says that Paul, in Romans, viewed the Law as "a temporary phase in God's plan... (primarily) to increase the trespass"[543] of sin, to prepare the human condition to accept God's grace. In displacement theology, 'Israel' as a descriptive term is redefined. It no longer includes solely ethnic Jews based on an election by God. It is now used to describe those people elected by God, from *both* Jews and Gentiles, who come to Christ in faith. As a result of such a conversion theory, there is introduced "an unbridgeable chasm into scripture itself"[544].

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[542] Dunn, Justice, 10.

[543] Talbert, 303.

[544] Lloyd Gaston, Paul and the Torah, (Vancouver: University of B.C. Press, 1987), 45.

4.2: Non-Conversion

This theory argues that there has always been two separate paths to salvation, one Jewish and one Christian. The misunderstanding was the result of the new dispensation which the Church understood to mean that salvation for the Jews must be enacted in the same manner as Christians. But the non-conversion theory contradicts this idea and argues that the Jews are saved by virtue of the Torah-covenant and the Christians by the Christ-event; a dual covenant theology. This theory upholds the election of the Jews as God's chosen people even with the appearance of Christ. It protects the validity of the Torah for the Jews as well. Israel failed through unbelief but this unbelief referred to Torah responsibilities, not to Jesus as Messiah. As a result of their 'misstep', salvation is offered to the Christians, not instead of the Jews, but together with the Jews. This theory raises, however, the question of whether Paul really intended to argue this position.

4.2.1 Dual Covenants

One of the advocates of the dual covenant interpretation is Lloyd Gaston. He begins with Romans 9 where he says that Paul is never critical of Israel, indeed,

Paul upholds their very election[545]. But now God has decided to offer an additional path to salvation through Christ. In this act, he has called to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. One of the most intriguing points made by Gaston is that Israel is not as much guilty of rejecting Jesus as it is guilty of rejecting the Gentile's place in God's plan. Faith in Christ, Gaston says, is not the issue, "it is rather openness to the Gentiles"[546]. He elaborates:

> Israel was right to pursue a Torah of righteousness and was wrong only in not realizing that the goal of that Torah, in which God's righteousness would be extended also to the Gentiles, was now at hand. Being distracted by works (which of course should be done) Israel was faithful to Torah as it relates to Israel, but with respect to the goal of that Torah as it relates to Gentiles, they stumbled and were unfaithful[547].

This is quite a different perspective for Jewish "guilt". The Jews still keep the Torah, their Law given to them by Yahweh, and Gentile salvation, by Christ, is valid alongside that of the Jews. Gaston even argues against using the term "guilt" to refer to the Jews, because as he points out, the 'rock' over which the Jews stumbled was placed there by Yahweh in order to bring salvation to the Gentiles.

This is what Paul is referring to when he praises the

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[545] Gaston, 140.

[546] Gaston, 141.

[547] Ibid.

zeal of the Jews yet reprimands their lack of knowledge. They were ignorant of God's righteousness (10:3). They failed to recognize that "the righteousness of God for Gentiles, which is the goal of the Torah, has now been manifested, and it is the failure of Israel to acknowledge that it is this which Paul holds against them"[548]. When Paul says that many of the Jews were blinded, he does not mean it as a punishment, but as part of God's plan of salvation[549]. Paul often makes the point that Israel's election is solely by God's grace and that this is how they will be saved. But the new Christian members boasted that they replaced the Jews (i.e. as in the olive tree analogy) and that the Jews had been removed to make room for the Gentiles. But Paul rejects this idea several times in the course of chapters 9-11. He often refers to a remnant saved by God (e.g.,9:27, 11:5). Even his prediction in 11:15b[550] coupled with "all Israel will be saved" in 11:26 suggests that the Jews have not been replaced by the Gentiles.

Gaston argues that as a result of the dual covenant plan of salvation, Israel will be saved separately from

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[548] Gaston, 142.

[549] Ibid., 143.

[550] "For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?" (Romans 11:15b).

Christ, although some, like Paul, have chosen to accept the Christian dispensation instead of the Jewish. But God's promises are irrevocable and He is faithful to His covenant[551]. Even if the method of salvation for the rest of the Jews will be enacted by Christ at the Parousia, it will be Christ in a different role, not as the Christian Messiah[552]. When Paul argues that the Gentile salvation will provoke the Jews to jealousy, it is usually assumed that this refers to faith in Christ. Gaston argues that what Paul actually hopes for is that "Israel would become more faithful to Torah"[553], thus emulating the Christian faith in a Jewish manner. Israel's 'misstep' or stumble is not an assignation of blame. Gaston concludes that:

> (t)he emphasis is always on God, who blinds and trips Israel in order to save the Gentiles. The starting point is, of course, the rock placed in Zion with its double function: stumbling for Israel, inclusion for Gentiles[554].

But ultimately both Israel and the Gentiles will be saved, albeit in different ways[555].

Another aspect of the non-conversion theory which is

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[551] Gaston, 147.

[552] Gaston, 148.

[553] Ibid.

[554] Ibid., 149.

[555] For example, see Donaldson, 86.

related to the dual covenant idea is E. F. Stroter's "Dispensationalism". This aspect attributes to the Jews a present role in human history.

4.2.2 E.F. Stroter and Dispensationalism

As a result of, or perhaps in connection with, the idea that there is a dual covenant theology at work in Paul, it is possible to perceive Israel's role in Romans 9 to 11 in a more positive light. Dispensationalism is the idea that not only is Israel not replaced by the Gentiles, but that Israel has its own mission and role to fulfil in the world. Had the Jews accepted Jesus as Messiah, they would have abandoned their mission and defied God. Dispensationalism rejects "a hermeneutic that justifies blanket Christian appropriation and spiritualization of the Old Testament covenants made by God with the Jewish people"[556]. It affirms an "effort to do justice to the Jewish Scriptures on their own terms"[557].

According to E. F. Stroter, the mission of Israel is to "bring the light of the Torah to humanity... (it is) a

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[556] Charles H. Cosgrove, "Hermeneutical Election", Elusive Israel: The Puzzle of Election in Romans, (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 52.

[557] Ibid.

mission of Israel to the rest of the world"[558]. With the appearance of Christ, whom Christians claim is the long-awaited Jewish Messiah, it would seem that the rejection of unbelieving Jews is inevitable. Yet the Jews possess a "nonrescindable call from God"[559] as well as God's irrevocable promises. Paul, argues Stroter, assumes that:

> the Jewish people remain God's people Israel after the appearance of Christ-- possessing their own irrevocable gifts and calling from God, generation after generation- also presumes... not only God's preservation of the Jews but Judaism itself, by which Jews are constituted as true Israel[560].

The appeal of this theory is apparent. It does more than just offer Israel its own path to salvation separate from Christ. It also upholds both the validity and the importance of Judaism as it exists in the present. Jews and Judaism alike are not put on hold, waiting for the end of this age but are given a mission to fulfil in the present age. That mission is to "maintain their identity as Israel by practising Judaism, which means that *they ought not convert*"[561]. This is an entirely different perspective from the notion of Jewish abrogation.

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[558] Cosgrove, 53.

[559] Ibid.

[560] Ibid., 55.

[561] Ibid.; italics added.

Like the conversion theory, it is possible to find evidence within Biblical texts, in this case both Jewish and Christian, to support the non-conversion position.

4.2.3 Scriptural Support

4.2.4.1 Hebrew Scripture

It is not necessary to reiterate the scriptural references taken from the Hebrew Bible and the way in which Paul applies them to his arguments. Apart from the faith of Abraham passage in Romans 4, and the Jacob and Isaac passages in Romans 9:6b-13, there is little scriptural evidence which will positively support a non-conversion theory. That being said, it is still possible to argue for the non-conversion theory. As I discussed earlier, Paul often referred to and cited various scriptural passages to support his arguments. But if one is determined to maintain a conversion position based upon these references, one may do so only as Paul did, by removing the passages from their original context and by creatively interpreting their meanings in order to support one's arguments. Paul uses various Hebrew scripture passages to defend his Gentile mission and present Israel's 'failure'. But the passages in their original context do not support any argument for Jewish conversion. The passages refer to the Israelite people and their relation to Yahweh. Thus it is possible to

argue for a non-conversion theory based on scriptural evidence by arguing against the use of the same passages in the conversion position. In order to argue for the conversion position, it is necessary to observe Paul's adaptations of scripture and to perceive how he applies them to his arguments. In order to do so he must remove these passages from their original context to make them fit his own re-interpretation. The difficulty in such an approach is obvious, however. In order to understand Paul, one must refer to his own arguments and the way in which he applies the Hebrew scriptural references to his arguments. Paul had a specific intention in mind: to demonstrate that Jesus was the predicted Messiah and that the Jews did not accept him. Thus, while it may be desirable to disregard Paul's use of the Hebrew scriptures because of the change in context, one cannot do so without running the risk of altering the content of Paul's letters.

4.2.3.2 New Testament Exegesis as Applied to Faith and Law

In this section I have chosen two passages in particular from Romans which I think can be interpreted to support a non-conversion position. The first is the faith of Abraham passage in Romans 4 and the second is the Jacob and Isaac passages in Romans 9:6b-13. The first passage can be seen to argue that the Jews come to God via faith and not

Law and the second passage demonstrates that the Jews understood that salvation and election were never meant to be based on works. It is a mistake to juxtapose Jewish Law with Christian faith, despite the fact that by doing so one can argue that the Jews approached God in the wrong manner and must now accept Jesus as Messiah in order to be saved. Judaism is a religion rooted in Law, governed by Law but its adherents come to Yahweh in faith, as do the Christians to Christ. However, and I will rely on E. P. Sanders' 'covenantal nomism' to defend this point, the Jews adhere to the Law as a response to God's mercy and their own faith. The Law is not their means to salvation but the way in which they honour their covenant with Yahweh through Abraham. This argument alone offers a strong challenge to the theory of conversion which relies on a dichotomy of Law and faith.

4.2.3.3 Romans 4: The Faith of Abraham

I have already discussed the way in which Paul uses Genesis 15:6[562] in order to demonstrate how Gentiles can come to the 'people of God' by faith instead of following the Law. But here I propose to argue that this passage can be used to maintain a non-conversion position on Israelite

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[562] "And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen 15:6).

salvation. I base this argument on the notion that Jewish salvation within Judaism is based on faith in God and Torah-works are only a secondary response to the grace of God.

When Yahweh told Abraham of His promise to greatly number his descendants, Abraham "believed Him and was reckoned righteous". It was not based on Abraham's character or any deed or work. This is the original establishment of the Abrahamic covenant. Yahweh later requires circumcision as a *seal* of the covenant (Gen 17:10), not as the establishment of it. Yahweh's words in Genesis 17:11b reflect this: "it shall be a sign of the covenant between you and me". Faith is the entry requirement into the Abrahamic covenant, supporting the idea that it is *faith* which leads to salvation for the Jews and not the Law, contradicting many years of Pauline and Christian interpretation.

Paul uses the example of Abraham to defend his mission to the Gentiles. As it stood before the appearance of Christ, the only way to become a member of the "people of God" was to convert to Judaism and adhere to the Law in all its connotations. Paul believed that Jesus' coming freed the Gentiles from this requirement. Abraham has long been considered the father of the Jews by virtue of the covenant which he shared with God and the seal of circumcision. But

Paul stresses that God approved of, or reckoned Abraham righteeous because of his faith. It is this point, that Abraham's faith preceded both the giving of the Law and the requirement of circumcision, which Paul argued provided the means for the Gentiles to become members of the people of God. Unfortunately, the interpretation of this particular passage in Romans has come to be seen as support for the abolition of the Jewish Law.

4.2.3.4 Isaac and Jacob (Romans 9:6b-13)

This passage, within the conversion theory, is often taken to demonstrate that it is not unexpected that some Jews accepted Jesus as Messiah and others did not, since from early in Jewish history there existed a distinction among the Israelites. It was used to demonstrate that the Jewish approach to salvation, mistakenly perceived as Torah-righteousness, was wrong and in opposition to faith. However, this passage may be interpreted in a different light. It does not so much contradict works-righteousness in the Jewish religion as it demonstrates God's absolute authority and that God's election does not rest on works or character. The fact that Paul presents this passage as a compilation of various Genesis passages means that he recognized how the Jews understood their covenantal relationship with God. This differed from the typical

Christian construction. The Jews believed they entered a covenant relationship with God by faith and their works were a way of responding to and honouring God.

It is true that God did distinguish between even the descendants of Abraham as is evident in Genesis 21:12[563] and Genesis 25:23[564]. God often sovereignly chooses one person over another[565] because of His absolute authority. Paul uses this passage to demonstrate that God is free to choose a new people but the text itself seeks to show that God's election has no basis in human striving. This is a different picture from the one of Jews striving as a means to salvation. It means that the Jews themselves did not understand their religion to be one of works-righteousness.

This passage, however, can also be connected to Romans 4 and the faith of Abraham. If one can argue that the Gentiles come to God by faith because Abraham's faith preceded the giving of the Law, then it stands to reason

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[563] "Be not displeased because of the lad and because of the slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your descendants be named" (Gen 21:12).

[564] "And the Lord said to her, "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" (Gen 25:23); see also Malachi 1:2-3: "Yet I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau".

[565] Campbell, 29.

that the Jews can come to God by virtue of *their* faith. This contradicts the idea that the Jews can only attain salvation by works and deeds and lends support to the argument that Jewish works are a response to God's grace.

4.2.4 E. P. Sanders and Covenantal Nomism

E. P. Sanders describes the pattern of religion of Judaism in Paul's time as 'covenantal nomism'. It contains the following elements: election, faith, covenant, obedience and disobedience, guilt, repentance, atonement and forgiveness[566]. Sanders describes the state of the human condition of Israel in this way: by accepting the covenant, the adherents no longer suffer from the consequences of Adam's disobedience. But because of further disobedience on the part of the Israelites, such as the Golden Calf incident, the Israelites and their God are estranged. The goal now of each Israelite is to regain the previous place in the relationship with God. The acceptance, by faith, of God's covenant and the response of obedience to God's Law was the way to do this.

With the covenant came the Law but the Jews do not attain salvation by obeying the Law. Even disobedience of the commandments does not negate the covenant. The only way

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[566] Sanders "Patterns", 476.

to nullify the covenant is to deny the implications of the covenant itself[567]. There is, of course, an obligation to obey the Law but God does not make His offering of grace and salvation conditional on its obedience. It is from a misunderstanding of this idea that the perception of Judaism as a religion of legalistic works-righteousness developed and the misconception that Israelites "earn" salvation. According to Jewish scripture and doctrine, the Jews gain salvation solely as a result of God's grace[568].

Obedience is important, however, because it is the response to Yahweh's grace. Sanders points out that the Rabbis saw themselves as living within the "(f)ramework of a covenant offered by God and accepted... by them. They are prepared and eager to fulfil their side of the covenant"[569]. The result of disobedience is sin and thus punishment. Sanders describes the Torah as "the book in which sins and righteous deeds are recorded"[570]. But in Palestinian Judaism, it was possible to return to the realm of salvation even after sinning. This took place by remorse and atonement. Once an Israelite accepted, by faith, the

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[567] Sanders, PPJ, 95.

[568] Ibid., 97.

[569] Ibid., 106.

[570] Ibid., 37.

covenantal relationship with God, sins could be forgiven if one repented. The nature of repentance restored the original relationship between God and humanity which had existed before the sin[571]. Sanders argues that the universally held view was that "those who are in the covenant will remain in and will receive the covenantal promises unless they remove themselves"[572].

Works and deeds play an important role in Judaism, not for the attainment of salvation but in the judgement of Yahweh. While the basic premise is that God rewards fulfilments and punishes sins, the Rabbis stressed that one should fulfil a commandment for its own sake and not to earn regard[573]. But works and deeds do not earn salvation in Judaism. Arguing the opposite ignores the grace of God which was so much a part of the original election of the Israelites by Yahweh as a gracious saving event.

The long-held view that Judaism is purely legalistic seems logical until one examines the overall pattern of Rabbinic soteriology. This pattern includes an offered covenant, a chosen people, acceptance of the requirements of the covenant as a gracious response to its offering and the

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[571] Sanders, PPJ, 37.

[572] Ibid., 157.

[573] Ibid., 122.

great mercy of a God who will forgive any sin as long as true repentance resides in the heart of the believer. Salvation rests on more than having a certain number of fulfilments over sins and the only way for a person to be completely removed from the covenantal relationship is to reject God. If true repentance is present even in this case, one will be forgiven. The Jewish God is not a God who tallies merits or judgements but one who bestows mercy on those willing to receive it.

4.2.5 Implications of the Non-Conversion Theory

First of all, it is necessary to address Paul's use of scriptural references from the Hebrew bible. He did, as I have demonstrated, remove each reference from its original context but that is, in a sense, irrelevant. We must base Paul's argument and indeed, logic, on what he wrote and concluded. Despite the fact that the original meanings of the passages are different from what Paul used them to say, in order to properly analyze Paul, we must examine the end result, however much this is at odds with the meaning of the original text.

Imposing a non-conversion theory onto Romans often appears to contradict Paul's own words. While it is certainly correct that Judaism is not a works-righteousness religion and its adherents are elected based on faith, this

does not mean that Paul did not perceive the reign of Law to be at an end with the appearance of Christ. Romans abounds with Paul's negativity towards the Law: one is now justified apart from the Law (3:28); the Law introduces sin (5:13); the Law leads to death (7:5); enslavement to the Law (7:6); and the Law has ended (10:4). One only has to turn to Galatians to see how hostile Paul can be towards the Law.

While the theory of a dual-covenant, non-conversion theology is a pleasing one, especially comforting to the Jewish-Christian dialogue, an interpreter of Paul must rely on Paul and his words. One must avoid the danger of reading into the text something that is not supported by it in order to render a solution that is pleasing to all parties. While the conversion theory is offensive to Jews and Judaism, and the non-conversion theory has not received wide support, I now turn to Paul's 'mystery' passage of Romans 11:25-32. This provides a third potential theory of salvation for the Jews.

4.3: A *Sonderweg* for Israel

This particular theory, a *sonderweg* or "special way" of salvation for Israel, focuses on chapter 11 of Romans in general and specifically on 11:25-32. It is an interpretation which goes against typical Pauline

interpretation. But Paul never quite condemns his fellow kinsmen according to the flesh by requiring conversion of an unbelieving people. Romans 9 to 11 contains some very specific examples of this: "Ουχ οιον δε οτι εκπεπτωκεν ο λογος του θεου·" (9:6a); "μη αδικια παρα τω θεω· μη γενοιτο" (9:14); and "μη απωσατο ο θεος τον λαον αυτου; μη γενοιτο" (11:1). Each passage strengthens the argument that Paul did not necessarily require Jewish conversion unless they came to belief on their own accord.

A great deal of evidence has been presented to say that conversion is the only means of salvation for the Jews. My own analysis of the conversion position demonstrates its coherence and support. However, one key point must be made: there is a shift in Paul's argumentation from chapters 1-10 to chapter 11 of Romans. Many reasons have been given to explain this change in Paul and predominantly among them is the argument that Paul himself realized that the Jews were condemned unless they came to salvation by Jesus. While Paul believed this to be true he could not bear to say it[574]. I disagree with this claim. I think that it denies the validity and force of Paul's arguments. I argue instead

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[574] An example of this position is Frank Thielman. He argues that "Paul was driven by the pressure of his deeply rooted loyalty to the traditions of his fathers to contradict the logical outcome of his argument in chapter nine", 169.

that when Paul reaches his "inevitable" conclusion, it jars with his belief in the faithfulness of God.

It is at this point that Paul's Jewish context must be taken into consideration. Paul was raised as a Jew within a Torah-context, as well as within a context of 'election' to the chosen people of God. Paul existed within Sanders' 'covenantal nomism'. As I earlier pointed out, the faithfulness of God is at the heart of the Jewish religion. God makes promises and God remains faithful to them. If the Jews were elected to the chosen people, then that election would stand despite any disobedience or action on the part of the Jews. Paul himself recognizes this at the end of chapter 11: "*For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable*" (v. 29, emphasis added). Paul lived within this context of faith, election, promise and covenant. When he denies the rejection of the Jewish people, he uses himself as an example: "I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. *God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew*" (11:1b-2a, emphasis added). Paul's God is one who remains faithful to his promises. The difficulty arises when one attempts to reconcile chapter 11 with the preceding two chapters. The logical conclusion is the rejection of the Jews but Paul halts that line of thought in favour of their salvation.

But then, shifts of argument and reversals of ideas are not at all new to Paul!

4.3.1 Argument Shifts and Reversals in Romans

Paul begins Romans 9 with a juxtaposition of two ideas, each of which are connected to the salvation of the Jews. In 9:1 he says that "I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying" and then in 9:3 he wishes that he could be cut off from Christ. Wayne Meeks asserts that:

> Having so carefully and forcefully declared the confidence in God that is the very substance of faith, Paul then astonishes his hearers by solemnly swearing that his own heart is full of the opposite confidence[575].

Paul often refers to reversals in the scheme of eschatological salvation. The Jews who pursued the Law did not attain righteousness and the Gentiles who pursued nothing were justified (9:30-31). The stumbling of the Jews brings salvation to the Gentiles (11:11). Finally, the salvation which was once offered first and solely to the Jews is now offered first to the Gentiles. Even Paul's perspective on the Law shifts from passage to passage. Dichotomies, juxtapositions, and argument shifts are not new to Paul. It is eminently possible that there is a

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[575] Wayne A. Meeks, "On Trusting an Unpredictable God: A Hermeneutical Meditation on Romans 9-11", Faith and History: Essays in Honour of Paul W. Meyer ed. Carroll, Cosgrove, and Johnson, (Georgia: Scholar's Press, 1990), 107.

contradiction in chapter 11 because Paul had a different intention in mind.

That there is a contradiction between chapters 1-10 and 11 seems evident. As Beker argues: "Paul consigns Israel to a 'complete hardening'- an 'eternal destruction'- in 9:22 and 10:21 only to reverse his stance by stating in 11:25 that the hardening of Israel is to be removed"[576]. But there is only a contradiction if one assumes that Paul had always meant for the Jews to be condemned. Since he did not, as his own words indicate, his shift to the eventual salvation of Israel is not really a contradiction.

4.3.2 The μυστηριον of 11:25b

Paul discusses the notion of "mystery" as applied to salvation in Romans 11: "το μυστηριον τουτο, ινα μη ητε παρα εαυτοις φρονιμοι, οτι πωρωσις απο μερους τω ισραηλ γεγονεν, αχρις ου το πληρωμα των εθνων εισελθη·" (Romans 11:25).

As to what this mystery refers to, many answers have been offered. Dunn argues, for instance, that the mystery is that the Gentiles have always been the intended aim of God's salvation and mercy[577]. Michael Vanlaningham argues

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[576] Beker, 63.

[577] Dunn, Theology, 526.

that the mystery actually refers to the "order of salvation of Gentiles and all Israel" and that now Jewish salvation is dependant on Gentile salvation[578]. Krister Stendahl, however, to whom much of the credit for the *Sonderweg* theory goes, presents a different perspective. He argues that "Paul's reference to the mystery (*musterion*) in 11:25 is meant to convey that its future fulfilment is unknown or 'mysterious' so that no one can predict its details"[579]. The same means of salvation cannot be offered to Jew and Gentile without contradiction[580] because it would "undercut (Paul's) own purpose"[581]. The question of course is, what means of salvation is offered to the Jews? Stendahl argues that it will not be by Jesus.

Stendahl bases his argument on the logic of Paul. He argues that Israel will not be saved by Jesus, and as proof of this he points out that there is no explicit reference to Christ from 10:17 to 11:36, and that Paul understood that Israel would not be saved by Jesus because "that attempt

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[578] Michael G. Vanlaningham, "Romans 11:25-7 and the Future of Israel in Paul's Thought", The Masters' Seminary Journal 3/2 (Fall 1992), 147.

[579] Hafemann, 42; also refer to Stendahl, Meanings: The Bible as Document and as Guide, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

[580] Ibid., 54.

[581] Ibid.

failed"[582]. Thus only "a miraculous act by God himself could accomplish this salvation. (There are then) two separate means of salvation, one for the Gentiles and one for the Jews"[583]. Paul never says that the Jews must accept Jesus as Messiah. He does say in 11:25 that all Israel will be saved. This, according to Stendahl, means that there is a *Sonderweg* or special salvation for the Jews.

Reidar Hvalvik strongly contests this argument. He asks the question with which we are concerned: "Is it at all possible to imagine Paul maintaining a *Sonderweg* for Israel within the framework of Romans?"[584]. His answer is an emphatic negative. He provides three reasons for this position. First, he argues that "salvation is closely related to the gospel"[585]. Then, "salvation is given to those who have faith (in Jesus)"[586]. Finally he argues that "the gospel is addressed to Jew and Gentile equally, but to

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[582] Dan G. Johnson, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 11", CBQ 46 (1984), 101; also refer to Stendahl, Paul Among the Jews and Gentiles, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1992).

[583] Ibid., 101;

[584] Reidar Hvalvik, "A '*Sonderweg*' for Israel: A Critical Examination of a Current Interpretation of Romans 11:25-27", JSNT 38 (1990), 90.

[585] Ibid.

[586] Ibid.

the Jews first"[587]. He also refutes Stendahl's argument that since Jesus is not mentioned from Romans 10:17 to 11:36, it means that the Jews are not to convert to Christianity. Hvalvik responds with "it is incredible that he (Paul) thought of God apart from Christ"[588].

Each of Hvalvik's arguments are sound, yet it is possible to present a different interpretation of each based on the text. Salvation *is* closely related to the gospel, but only for the Christians and those Jews who accept Christ. Salvation is by faith in Jesus for the Christians and by faith in God's purpose and His covenant for the Jews. One point is accurate: the gospel was addressed to the Jews first, inevitably since they are the chosen people, but it does not necessarily mean that it was to be forced on them. Finally, we arrive at Hvalvik's last argument: it is impossible for Paul to conceive of Jesus as separate from God.

Again, to respond we must turn to Paul's Jewish background. He was raised and lived as a Jew, sharing in the covenantal relationship with Yahweh and adhering to the Torah. Paul himself claimed to be blameless under the Law (Philippians 3:6). It is far more likely that Paul would

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[587] Ibid.

[588] Ibid., 91.

have conceived of the gospel within a framework of Judaism rather than as something completely new. Paul did not see himself as converting from one religion to another but rather as moving forward into an extension of Judaism. But first and foremost, he was a Jew, one of the chosen people, and it was inconceivable to think that the Jews would be superseded or condemned because they rejected what Paul considered to be the new manifestation of Judaism. As we discussed earlier, the only way to be removed from a covenantal relationship with God is to reject Him and His Torah. The Jews rejected Jesus as Messiah but they adhered to God and His Torah. Paul understood this and thus "all Israel will be saved" (11:26).

One problem inherent in this interpretation of Romans 9-11 is the difficulty in reconciling it with several passages in chapter 10. In Romans 10:3, Paul says that "For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness". This passage suggests that the Jews are condemned because they adhered to a righteousness of their own devising. In 10:9, as well, Paul adds "because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved". Paul concludes chapter 10 with the words: "But of Israel he says 'All day long I have held out

my hands to a disobedient and contrary people" (v. 21). These passages strengthen the argument that the Jews are to be rejected.

However, it also strengthens my theory that there is an argument shift in Paul's logic from chapters 1-10 and chapter 11. The logical and seemingly inevitable conclusion to chapters 1-10 is the ultimate rejection of the Jews. But Paul's first words in chapter 11 dispel this notion. He says "I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite" (11:1). He then argues that "God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew" (11:2). He goes on to ask "have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means!" (11:11). He finally ends his train of argument with the emphatic words "All Israel will be saved" (11:26). This conclusion is logical even in the face of his earlier arguments in Romans 10. Paul has developed a new argument which can be used to support the *Sonderweg* theory of salvation for the Jews. It is evident from his arguments in chapter 11, despite their apparent contradiction in chapter 10, that the Jews are not to be condemned or rejected for their rejection of Jesus as Messiah.

4.3.3 Scriptural Exegesis 11:25-32: Introduction

Paul makes several important points concerning Jewish

salvation in this passage: he connects Gentile and Jewish salvation (v.25), he asserts that all Israel will be saved (v.26), that the Jews are elected and beloved (v.28), that their gifts and calling are irrevocable (v.29) and that God has mercy on all people (v.32). I have presented several possible interpretations for Paul's 'mystery' but none truly fit the context of the passage. The mystery is that the Gentiles are saved as a result of Jewish hardening. When the Gentiles are saved, God will turn back to His chosen people and they will be saved, but not by Christ. If Paul had meant that they would be saved by Christ, he would have said so explicitly. He never hesitated at any other point in Romans to refer back to Christ. The fact that any reference to Christ is missing here is important.

Paul describes Israel's future salvation in 11:26b-27 as:

> και ουτως πας Ισραηλ σωθησεται, καθως γεγραπται, Ηξει εκ Ζιων ο ρυομενος, αποστρεψει ασεβειας απο Ιακωβ και αυτη αυτοις η παρ' εμου διαθηκη, οταν αφελωμαι τασ αμαρτιας αυτων· (Rom 11:26b-27).

Conversion theorists of course, apply this passage to Jesus but that would misconstrue the context. It is interesting to look at the original references upon which the passage is based: Isaiah 59:20-21 and Jeremiah 31.33.

4.3.3.1 Romans 11:26b/ Isa 59:20-21

This particular passage in Romans has been debated for many years. Many conversion theorists argue that the "Deliverer" is a direct reference to Christ and the time at which he will "banish ungodliness from Jacob" is his return at the Parousia. This is a credible interpretation when considered in light of Paul's strong belief in Jesus as Messiah. However, the lack of direct reference to Jesus in chapter 11 is important to note.

The original passage in Isaiah is:

> And he will come to Zion as Redeemer to those in Jacob who turn from transgression, says the Lord. And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lord" (Isa 59:20-21).

This passage, unlike Paul's version, is concerned with God's active intervention, not a prediction of a future saviour's intervention: "To those who turn from their transgressions Yahweh comes in mighty power and zeal as Redeemer"[589]. The reference to covenant is a reminder that God is present among Israel in times of despair: "no matter how faithless the people of God, there will always be a remnant to carry on his gracious purpose"[590]. The idea of remnant is not new in Paul and it is presented several times in Romans 9-11. In 9:27 the idea of the remnant is depicted as a judgement

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[589] IB, Vol. 5, "Isaiah", 695.

[590] Ibid., 697.

but in 11:5 Paul speaks of a remnant chosen by grace. The idea that God, Himself, has preserved some of Israel as a remnant suggests that He may have special plans for the Jews, not connected with the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah.

4.3.3.2 Romans 11:27/ Jer 31:33

In 11:27 Paul writes about a covenant which God has established with Israel. It is connected to the idea of the saved remnant and the future salvation of Israel. Since Paul reintroduces the idea of a covenant within such a context, it is not impossible to argue that Paul is referring to the original Israelite covenant which He intends to uphold Himself.

The Book of Jeremiah is the origin of the covenant clause in Romans 11:27, which speaks of a new covenant. It will not contain a new Law, since the Law was established by the Mosaic covenant. The covenant:

> is to be new in the sense that it will confer a new, inward motivation and power for fulfilling the law already known. The promised forgiveness of sin and the knowledge of Yahweh will give men a new incentive for obeying Yahweh and his law[591].

It is evident that this covenant clause could be applied to the new Christian dispensation as revealed in Jesus as Messiah. But the entire origin of the passage is

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[591] IB Vol. 5, "Jeremiah", 1038.

concerned with Yahweh's covenantal relationship with His people. The new covenant is established to strengthen the relationship and provide incentive for fulfilling the Law.

I have already argued that Paul re-interpreted Scripture references to make his point but in each case something was added to make it apply to Jesus as Messiah. Here, in a context solely of Jewish salvation, Paul changes very little. It is thus possible to argue that he saw Jewish salvation as separate from Gentile.

4.3.4 Implications of the *Sonderweg* Theory

The way in which this differs from the non-conversion position is the emphasis on the hardening of the Jews; the way in which God uses His chosen people to offer salvation to the Gentiles. In 9:5 Paul points out that the Gentile Messiah descends from the Jews. In 9:6b-13, he demonstrates God's absolute authority to elect and choose anyone for His own purpose. Paul again demonstrates this with the imagery of the clay and potter (9:19-23). Paul also argued that God laid in Zion a rock over which the Jews stumbled (9:33). This, though, was not the fault of the Jews but the divine action of God. There is no distinction between Jew and Greek (10:12) because the same intervening God acts for both. God makes use of Israel's disobedience (10:21) to

offer salvation to the Gentiles. He did not need to offer Jesus as Messiah to the Jews for their salvation. Their faith in the purpose of Yahweh and their adherence to the Torah already provided their means to salvation. The only way to prevent one's salvation was to reject Yahweh, and yet even this can be forgiven.

It stands to reason then, that Jesus was offered as Messiah, not to the Jews but to the Gentiles. The Jews were hardened, not by unbelief but by God[592], to provide time for the salvation of the Gentiles. God offered a new dispensation in Jesus, not because the Jews did not believe or were unable to fulfil the Law, but for the Gentiles who were outside the Law. For the accepting Gentiles, it was necessary to maintain a continuity between the gospel and Jewish history because one developed from the other. But one did not replace the other. All Israel will be saved and so they will, but it will be based on their covenant with Yahweh (11:27), not the Christian dispensation.

4.3.5 Summation

It is evident that within a modern day context of the Jewish-Christian dialogue, that the conversion theory is

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[592] "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that should not see and ears that should not hear" (Romans 11:7).

offensive to the Jews. Either of the non-conversion or *Sonderweg* theories would be more acceptable. Unfortunately, Paul's own words and 2000 years of Christian exegesis has led to an almost inevitable conclusion that in order to be saved, at least according to Paul, the Jews must convert to Christianity. But was this actually Paul's intention?

It is evident that Paul came to accept Jesus as Messiah, whether it was by a call or conversion. It is equally evident that he believed that faith in Jesus as the Messiah would bring salvation to the believer. But, in spite of his belief, Paul recognized that the majority of Jews did not believe as he did. Much of Paul's letter to the Romans is concerned with presenting Jesus as Messiah and with demonstrating that the Law was at an end for believers. Yet at almost the end, in Romans 11, he seems to take stock of what seems to be the inevitable conclusion: the rejection of his fellow kinsmen according to the flesh. He concluded that all Israel would be saved.

For thousands of years, exegetes have argued that Israel would indeed be saved if only they came to Jesus in faith. But a careful reading of the text challenges this interpretation. Stendahl's point that there are no explicit mentions of Jesus from 10:17 to 11:36 is an important one. Paul changed his argument. He could not explain how and why

the unbelieving Jews would be saved separately, only that they would be. The argument that Paul could not conceive of God as separate from Jesus is a specious one. He had thousands of years of religious history upon which to draw with no conception of anyone but Yahweh. In fact, having been raised in the monotheism of Judaism all his life, it is far more likely that he encountered difficulty in reconciling Jesus with God, not the other way around.

Is it possible that Paul's argument shift in Romans 11 was merely the result of anguish at the present state of the Jews? Of course it is possible, But it is equally possible that Paul's line of thought changed because he changed his mind. The Paul who reprimanded the Corinthians was blunt, despite his later apology. If Paul truly believed that the Jews were to be condemned, he would have simply admitted his anguish and not continued for another chapter contradicting that very belief.

Adherence to the conversion theory, despite its support, at the expense of any other possible interpretation, has done a grave injustice to the Jewish people and Judaism. In a sense, it does an injustice to Paul, a Jew, himself. It is evident that the antagonism, seen early in the Christian writings of Chrysostom, can be traced back through history. The view that the Jews are to be condemned because they do not accept Jesus as Messiah has

contributed to the anti-semitism of our own time. Paul's own words, especially in Romans 11, contradict any Christian anti-semitism directed toward the Jews for their non-acceptance of Jesus as Messiah.

5.0 CONCLUSION

At the end of a long journey into the examination of Pauline theology and the salvation of Israel, it is evident that few solutions to the dilemma have been offered. For almost 2000 years the salvation of Israel was attributed to Christian conversion and nothing else. The Jews were blinded and hardened and until they accepted Jesus as Messiah they would remain so. The validity of Judaism as a valid religious path to God was virtually disregarded, at least from the standpoint of Christianity, and the ideas of Torah-abrogation and Christian supersessionism took hold. Two thousand years of history from classical scholars to modern ones all agreed on this point: Judaism had been replaced by Christianity.

In this thesis, I have discovered that this anti-semitic belief has come full circle and it is only in recent decades that a Jewish-Christian dialogue has emerged. Chrysostom in the third century allowed his desire to uphold the primacy of Christianity to influence his interpretations. His words, supposedly directed at Christian Judaizers quickly degenerated into hostility and anti-semitic taunts. The threat that the continued existence of Judaism could possibly hold for Christianity underlies the fear that all four classical exegetes in this work fought against. This fear was evident in the question

that if Jesus was truly the predicted Jewish Messiah, what did the Jewish rejection mean? If the Jews reject Jesus, then it challenges both God's faithfulness and the Christian acceptance of Jesus. After all, if God is still faithful to His chosen people, and the Jews reject Jesus, how can Jesus be the actual Messiah? On the other hand, if Jesus is the predicted Messiah and the Jews who do not believe are rejected from God's salvation, then God's faithfulness is challenged. If God is not faithful to His chosen people, then His faithfulness to the Gentiles is also placed in jeopardy. It is possible that Chrysostom's harshness was motivated by such questions and doubts.

Augustine faced the same questions, albeit with much more caution and far less hostility. But he was motivated by his belief that because of Adam's sin, all of humanity suffered under the power of sin. He focused on Jesus more as the saviour who would remove the stain of sin rather than as the predicted Jewish Messiah. But his argument that an acceptance of Jesus as Messiah was the only way to escape sin did as much damage to the Christian perception of Judaism. He also introduced the notion that the "elect" actually applied to those whom God foreknew would have faith as opposed to the election of Israel, as a nation based on a covenant with Yahweh.

Martin Luther, on the other hand, is probably solely

responsible for the juxtaposition of 'works' and 'grace'. This is another prime example of an interpreter's polemic determining the result of his interpretation. Luther, like Augustine, struggled with the belief that all humanity was subject to sin. Like Augustine, he concluded that the only way to be saved was by the grace of God and thus everything else including the Law was excluded. Unfortunately, in the process, he also excluded Paul's whole purpose in introducing 'justification by grace'; it was to defend his mission to the Gentiles and provide a way for the Gentiles to enter the people of God without converting to Judaism and having to adhere to the Torah. It was not the means to comfort the troubles of a plagued conscience.

Calvin's predestination rests on the foundation of Augustine's 'elected to faith' and Luther's belief that those without grace are rejected. Calvin attributes election solely to the grace of God and argues that only those with God's grace will be saved. But he introduces a dilemma into his interpretation. The only way to receive grace is to have faith, and God bestows grace upon those whom He foresees will have faith. However, in that moment of bestowing grace, pre-creation, God arbitrarily determines who will receive grace and thus have faith. It presents the problem of whether the possession of grace leads to the

possession of faith or *vice versa*. The most incredible challenge presented by Calvin, however, is the argument that Israel, as a nation, was never elected by God, thus in the words of E. P. Sanders, challenging one of the pillars of Judaism.

The primary argument which each of the four interpreters had in common was the assumption that Judaism had been replaced by Christianity and that unless they converted to Christianity the Jews were doomed to be rejected. Unfortunately, this became the legacy for hundreds of years and introduced an almost unbridgeable chasm between Judaism and Christianity. In the 1900s however, an ideological shift was occurring. Interpreters, as in the case of Sanday and Headlam, were still reaching similar conclusions but the questions and methodologies were beginning to change.

W. D. Davies and E. P. Sanders both attempted to interpret Pauline theology within its original context of Judaism. Their examination of the connections between Rabbinic Judaism and Pauline theology has brought to light aspects of Judaism which had influenced Paul's letters and yet were largely ignored in typical exegesis. Davies presented a comparative analysis of Paul and Rabbinic Judaism which re-introduced scholars to Jewish-Pauline

elements in Paul's letters and the importance to which Paul assigned them. Sanders' presentation of the Jewish Torah in a context of covenantal nomism shattered the illusion that Judaism was merely a religion of works-righteousness. His analysis also challenged the idea that the Jews believed that salvation was a result of works and deeds. He presented the Jewish religion as a tapestry, comprised of election, faith, covenant, forgiveness and grace. By understanding the religion in which Paul lived we are able to comprehend the depth of his letters, and to reconcile the idea that the Jews can be saved apart from conversion to Christianity. Much credit is due to Krister Stendahl's influence for arguments presented in this thesis. His contention that Romans is a letter about Jewish-Christian relations, that Romans 9-11 is at the heart of Romans and that the Jews will be saved apart from Christian conversion have provided the basis for some of the arguments I have presented.

Earlier I made reference to the circle in which Pauline exegesis has travelled. The beginning was Chrysostom and those like him and the ending of that circle is the Holocaust. In the decades which followed the Holocaust scholars struggled to interpret and comprehend those same questions which Paul faced: Has God's word failed because the Jews reject Jesus as Messiah? Is God unjust? Have the

Jews fallen because they do not believe as the Christian does? Exempt of all extraneous interpretations, we are left solely with the words of Paul: "*By no means!*", and his emphatic conclusion to chapter 11: "*All Israel will be saved*".

In the course of this thesis, I have demonstrated that almost without exception, most Biblical and Pauline scholars throughout history have concluded that, based on Paul's words, unless the Jews convert to Christianity they will not be saved. My final chapter is devoted entirely to examining this in order to determine if this argument is sound. Of course, as I have said, the "Conversion theory" has a long history and the most support but as Clark Williamson asserts,

> (Chapters 9-11 are) Paul's most fully developed of the relation-ship between things Jewish and things Christian. Earlier passageson this subject need to be brought into dialogue with the trenchant passages in Romans[593].

Romans is the last letter which Paul wrote and it is safe to assume that his theology was more fully developed here than anywhere else. Contrary to typical classical exegesis, chapters 9-11 are at the heart of the epistle to the Romans. These chapters, and their importance in understanding Paul,

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[593] Clark M. Williamson and Ronald J. Allen, Interpreting Difficult Texts: Anti-Judaism and Christian Preaching, (London:SCM Press, 1989), 35.

cannot be disregarded. In light of this point, Paul's own words contradict the idea of an enforced Jewish conversion to Christianity.

The second theory which I examined was the 'Dual Covenant' theory. While this theory is not strongly substantiated in Paul's letter to the Romans, it does have merit. It presents the argument that the Jews approach salvation by their original Israelite covenant and the Christians attain salvation by virtue of the new dispensation offered in Jesus as Messiah. This theory retains a connection between the Jewish and Christian religions without the abrogation of one at the hands of the other. Again, while this theory has little explicit support, it does fit with Paul's own words that Israel is not rejected and they will be saved.

The third theory, the *Sonderweg* theory of salvation, is the one which I particularly support. It is probably a misnomer to call it a separate theory since it is an extension of the second theory. I base it on the shift which occurs in Paul's argument from chapters 1-10 and chapter 11. The apparently logical conclusion to Paul's argument in the first 10 chapters is that the Jews would be rejected for their unbelief. But in chapter 11, he argues that Israel will not be rejected, in fact, "all Israel will

be saved" because the gifts and call of God are irrevocable. The mystery clause of 11:25 can be understood in this light: that the Jews and Christians will be saved separately by a means known only to God.

5.1 Is there anti-Judaism in Paul?

This question is connected to the salvation of Israel. As we examine the interpreters of Paul, it becomes evident that many accepted without hesitation that Judaism had been superseded and the Torah abrogated. The problem is that for centuries there has been a fundamental misunderstanding of Paul and his letters. There are two schools of thought on whether Paul himself was anti-Judaic. John Gager elaborates,

> (Lloyd) Gaston attacks the inherited view of Paul as altogethermistaken, where (Rosemary) Ruethers accepts it as fundamentallycorrect. For Gaston, Paul can be saved from the charge of anti-Judaism; for Ruethers, he stands condemned[594].

This is a fairly accurate depiction of the debate. The question is: is Paul anti-Judaic, and if so, what are the implications for the Jewish-Christian dialogue?

This question is one of many at the heart of the Jewish-Christian dialogue in the decades following the

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[594] John G. Gager, The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 198.

Holocaust. Gager explains,

> As Christians faced charges that their own religion was touched by anti-Judaism at its very roots and that Christian anti-Judaism had powerfully influenced the anti-Semitism of Nazi Germany, many undertook a painful re-evaluation of their tradition ... Christians became increasingly more aware of the extent to which historical Christianity and its scriptures have denied the religious legitimacy of Judaism... Unless they succeed in finding within the New Testament some area which is substantially free of anti-Judaism, the issue becomes the legitimacy of Christianity[595].

Since the traditional view of Paul is that he rejected Israel and the Torah, one might be tempted to argue that Paul is indeed anti-Judaic. For example, when Paul argues that the Jews did not submit to God's righteousness, classical exegetes interpret this to mean that the Jews are rejected. However, it is equally possible that what Paul actually meant was that "the Jews have failed to understand the redemption of the Gentiles in Christ as the expression of God's righteousness"[596]. In other words, the Jews were not rejected for failing to accept Jesus as Messiah but rather for failing to accept that the Gentiles, in Jesus, also had a place in the people of God.

Whether Paul himself was considered anti-Judaic or not, later interpretation of his letters and indeed of the New

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[595] Gager, 202.

[596] Ibid., 249.

Testament, contained a distinct anti-Jewish content. The reasons for this are diverse. Clark Williamson argues that,

> Christian anti-Judaism also comes to expression in the claim that the church, sometimes called the 'New Israel' (a name which does not occur in the scriptures), is a universal community in contrast to the old, particularist and ethnocentric Jews[597].

In fact Williamson sees in this new Christian universalism a "new kind of exclusivism" which is aimed at "Jews who are now looked upon as beyond salvation (unless they cease being Jews by becoming Christians)"[598]. This leads back again to the Pauline debate on the faithfulness of Yahweh to His promises to the Jews in light of the universal salvation offered in Jesus as Messiah. The typical conclusion in historical exegesis is that Yahweh's promises to the Jews find their full expression *in* Jesus as Messiah and thus the Jewish conversion to Christianity is a requirement. However, and this cannot be stressed enough, Paul's own words in chapters 9-11 of Romans contradict this very argument. The traditional interpretation might have continued to hold sway were it not for the Holocaust.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust "some Christians took up the painful and agonizing self-criticism of their attitudes toward Judaism... The fact of Christian complicity

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[597] Gager, 3.

[598] Ibid.

in the Holocaust made such a reappraisal painfully incumbent upon all of (those) who are part of the Christian church"[599]. Two particular themes in traditional New Testament exegesis and theology must be re-addressed. The first is the claim "that the church displaced the Israel of God in the covenant with God... (and) that they (the Jews) should cease being Jews and become Christians"[600]. The second is the "supersessionist ideology, which inspired and reinforced an anti-Jewish practice embodied in preaching, teaching and identity"[601]. This is underlaid by the idea that the Gentiles are elected by God at the expense of the Jews. Clark Williamson takes the criticism a step further,

> With very few exceptions, most of them recent, few Christiantheologians have taken Jews seriously as a living people andJudaism as a living faith in the God of Israel[602].

He concludes that "for almost two thousand years Paul the apostle was [seen as] virtually the last... theologian to do so"[603]. Paul's words, especially those of Romans 9-11, are thus significant. Judaism and Israel were the first-elect

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[599] Clark M. Williamson, A Guest in the House of Israel: Post-Holocaust Church Theology, (Kentucky: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1993), vii.

[600] Ibid., 4.

[601] Ibid.

[602] Ibid., 9.

[603] Ibid.

of Yahweh. *It is into their faith and relationship with Yahweh which the Gentiles are invited.* **Finally, the Gentiles were never offered salvation at the expense of the Jews and it is this point, that is at the heart of Romans 9-11. Williamson puts it succinctly:**

> **Presumably, the God of the Bible could have made a brand-new start with the Gentiles. But God chose not to do so. Hence the Gentiles like it or not, (and most have not), were given and called by God to enter** *into the long-standing relationship of the God of Israel with the Israel of God*[604].

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[604] **Ibid., 105.**

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